Medieval England, 500-1500

Amt, Emilie,Smith, Katherine Allen

VISIT...

MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

500–1500

A Reader

Second Edition

edited by
Emilie Amt and
Katherine Allen Smith

READINGS IN MEDIEVAL CIVILIZATIONS AND CULTURES: VI
series editor: Paul Edward Dutton

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For our students

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INTRODUCTION

Medieval English history is rich in source material, and this book is intended to provide a sampling of those sources for students and other readers. To encompass several centuries of English history in 102 documents is, of course, impossible. Instead, we have tried both to convey some of the wonderful variety found in the written record and to supply pieces that will complement the textbooks and monographs that history students are likely to be reading in their courses. Some constitutional highlights and standard texts such as Magna Carta and Froissart's *Chronicles* are included here, but many of the contents are less well known because they have been less readily available. In this second edition, we have continued to emphasize political history and social history, and to seek out pieces that are readable and accessible to students. As a result, the sources are heavy on narrative material and comparatively light on record sources (charters, financial accounts, and so on), because the latter tend to be less useful to the non-specialist. With a few exceptions, we have also largely excluded literary sources, which are well represented in their own anthologies and other widely available editions, preferring instead to focus on the sources we call "historical" because they purport to record the reality of national events and people's lives.

In planning this revised second edition, we have sought to retain the strengths of the first, in particular its attention to the experiences of a rich array of historical actors—women as well as men, humble people as well as elites—and its inclusion of a range of viewpoints on political, social, and spiritual matters. The thematic clusters of documents on topics such as the Anglo-Saxon monarchy, lay piety, and late medieval commercial life that were a strength of the first edition have also been retained and enhanced. At the same time, we have aimed to increase the collection's usefulness to teachers and students, and to update its contents in a way that reflects recent developments in the study of medieval England. The most obvious change to those familiar with the first edition will be the new first chapter on the Anglo-Saxon period, which we have included in recognition that most textbooks (and thus many courses) on our subject begin closer to 500 than 1000 CE. The eighteen sources in Chapter 1 deal with key developments, such as the Gregorian mission and the Viking invasions, while attempting to convey something of the

texture of lived experience in early medieval England. Readers will also find much that is new in the five remaining chapters, which feature over twenty new sources. Some of these additions were selected with an eye to covering significant events, such as the conquest of Wales and the deposition of Edward II, not mentioned in the first edition, while others complement sources or extend coverage of themes from the first edition. The inclusion of multiple examples of particular genres, such as wills (docs. 12 and 93) and miracle collections (docs. 35 and 57), is meant to facilitate comparative analysis, while the addition of new sources on themes such as queenship (doc. 38) and Jewish communities (doc. 26) should prompt readers to assess continuity and change over time. Other additions to the second edition represent types of sources, such as proofs of age inquests (doc. 73) and household rolls (doc. 58) that scholars have utilized in increasingly creative ways. Finally, the second edition incorporates a variety of non-textual sources, in recognition of the growing interest in material culture and archaeological sources (docs. 5, 61, and 100) among historians of medieval England.

The revision process inevitably entailed difficult decisions about what material should be cut out to make room for new sources, given the need to keep the collection to a reasonable length. We have removed nineteen documents from the first edition, and condensed others, while attempting to retain the volume's chronological coherence and balanced coverage of different kinds of historical events and experiences. While we are aware that we may have advertently omitted some instructors' best-loved sources, we are hopeful that the richness of what has been added will help make amends.

As a teaching text, this anthology is meant to complement courses which take a chronological or thematic approach to England's medieval past. In the introductions and questions that accompany the entries, we have signaled the importance of situating each source within its historical landscape by paying close attention to the specific circumstances of its composition, its author's concerns, its original intended audience, and the conventions of its genre. More generally, in approaching medieval sources twenty-first-century readers need to maintain a critical stance that takes into account the nature of medieval society. Literacy was very limited throughout the medieval period; most of those who wrote were male clerics working either within the Church or on behalf of secular authorities, and most literate clerics themselves came from elite backgrounds. For all these reasons, medieval sources have a pervasive bias: they generally represent the perspective of the elite, usually the ecclesiastical or monastic elite, and overwhelmingly the male elite. Even when writers

record the testimony of common men and women, as for example in the coroners' rolls (doc. 60) or the records of a manorial court (doc. 72), a filter of officialdom still stands between the commoner's experience and the written record. Modern readers must be mindful of this, and alert to other potential limitations, as they attempt to make sense of these sources and the world in which they were produced.

On the other hand, some attempt to understand medieval viewpoints is crucial to understanding these documents and the stories they tell. We do not want to suggest that there is a single such viewpoint. The acceptance of hierarchy and authority, the importance of personal bonds, the pervasiveness of hardship, the tenuousness of life itself, the basic homogeneity of religious culture, the general acceptance of supernatural intervention in earthly matters, and the literalness with which people regarded both secular and sacred ritual were some of the elements that contributed to an experience shared by all levels of society. Yet it is a serious mistake to think of any human society, or even a group within that society, as monolithic. Rather than asking "what people thought" in the Middle Ages about some idea or aspect of life, and thus generalizing about hundreds of years of human experience and opinion, historians need to look out for differences as much as for consensus. In the eleventh century, for instance, Queen Emma (doc. 17) and Queen Edith (doc. 29) presented themselves as fulfilling very different ideals of royal womanhood. English Jews had many persecutors but also some protectors (docs. 42, 53). Everyone seemed to accept villeinage as the proper condition of the majority of the population—until John Ball preached against it and helped touch off the Peasants' Revolt (docs. 82, 83). While political and intellectual historians have long focused on controversies involving the medieval elite, recent scholarship has revealed that the fabric of society was a much richer tapestry than has traditionally been thought. Anyone who studies the past must bear in mind both the variety of human conditions and the wide spectrum of human reactions even in similar situations. Such an approach is not just a matter of reading a variety of texts: it is a matter of exploring the richness of a single text. We hope that the documents collected here will be read in such a way.

To facilitate such close, engaged reading, we have attempted to make the sources as accessible as possible. We have thus modernized older translations as needed and sought to make new translations that will feel fresh and readable. Mindful that readers new to the study of medieval England will encounter many unfamiliar terms, concepts, and institutions in the texts, we have included explanations of these (as well as other editorial additions) in square brackets. Despite our best efforts, some readers will likely have additional questions we

have not anticipated, and we hope these will inspire them to delve more deeply into the medieval past.

A NOTE ON MEDIEVAL ENGLISH MONEY

Throughout most of the period covered in this book, the standard units of English money were the pounds (£), shillings (s.), and pence (d. for the Latin *denarius*) that appear over and over in the documents reproduced here. Twelve pence made a shilling, and twenty shillings (or 240 pence) made a pound. Another unit frequently used in accounting was the mark, which consisted of thirteen shillings and four pence. In some of the Anglo-Saxon documents below, the *ora*, equal to sixteen pence, is the standard unit of account. A *mancus*, another Anglo-Saxon coin, was equal to thirty pence.

A penny was not an insubstantial amount of money. While it is impossible to convert medieval amounts into modern monetary equivalents, some idea of the value of money may be had from examining wages and prices. In the twelfth century, for example, an ordinary laborer who worked for money (though most people did not) might earn a few pence daily; a knight could earn eight pence a day. Many ordinary purchases cost less than a penny, hence the common practice of physically cutting the silver coins into half-pennies and quarter-pennies, or "farthings." A single sheep cost between four and nine pence to buy, and as part of a wool-producing flock it produced for its owner a profit of two or three pence annually. A riding horse cost £1, but a warhorse cost £20—as much as the annual income from a good-sized manor. These are just a few examples. A number of the documents in this book list various wages and prices, and the reader can easily draw further comparisons from them.

SHETLAND ISLANDS
ORKNEY ISLANDS
Hebrides
Scotland
North Sea
Edinburgh
PENNINES
ISLE OF MAN
York
Dublin
Ireland
Lincoln
Norwich
CAMBRIAN MOUNTAINS
England
Wales
River Thames
Oxford
Canterbury
London
Winchester
Calais
English Channel
N
0 100 200 km
0 50 100 miles

Chapter One

The Anglo-Saxon World, ca 500–1066

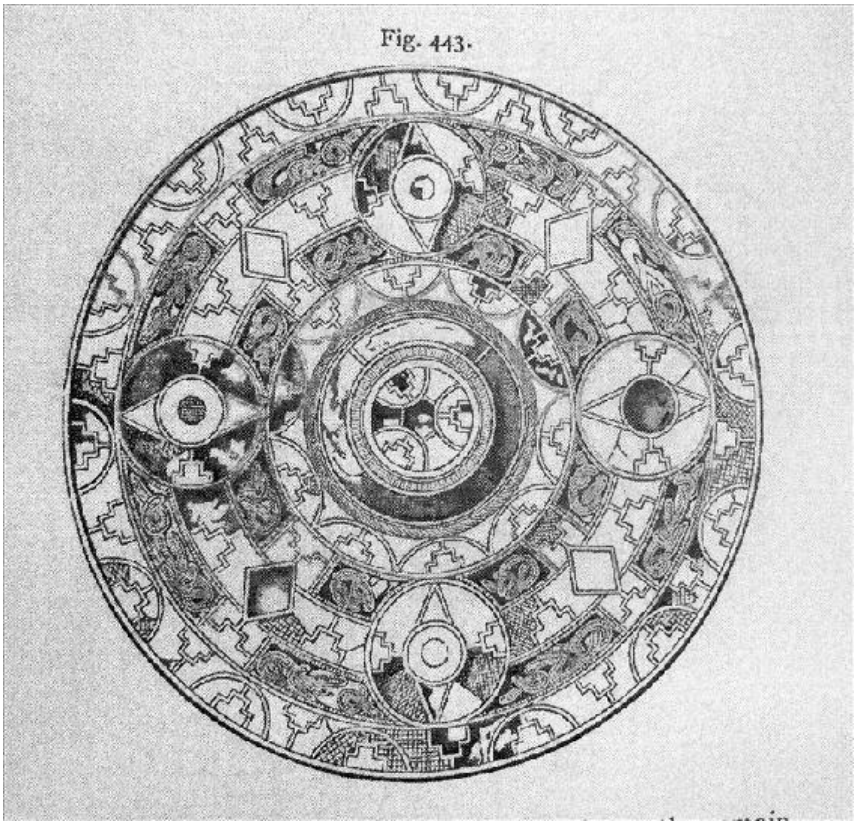

Fig. 1. The Kingston Brooch, seventh century. Discovered in a burial site in Kent in 1771, the stunning brooch demonstrates the metalworking skills of Anglo-Saxon craftsmen.

1. Gildas on the Coming of the Anglo-Saxons

The sixth-century De excidio et conquestu Britanniae *("On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain") is our only near-*

contemporary account of the end of almost four centuries of Roman rule in Britain and the advent of the Anglo-Saxons who would rule much of the island for the next six hundred years. Written by the cleric Gildas, the work resembles an epic sermon more than a work of history, and indeed its main aim is to chastise the sinful agents who brought about Britain's ruin. At the same time, Gildas's account largely corresponds to the following timeline of events: raids by Saxons, Picts, and Scoti in the late fourth century; a Roman military expedition designed to shore up Britain in 396/98; the departure of the final Roman troops from Britain in 407; a possible revolt against Roman magistrates (perhaps following a Roman refusal to provide further military aid) in 409/10; and the subsequent rise of Romano-British warlords who made use of Saxon mercenaries, who in turn overran the island, meeting some resistance from native leaders such as Ambrosius Aurelianus (whose story later provided inspiration for the legend of King Arthur). Note that Gildas erroneously associates the construction of the Antonine Wall (begun 142 CE) with the Roman withdrawal from Britain.

Source: trans. J.A. Giles, *Six Old English Chronicles* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1848), pp. 305–13; revised.

No sooner had the Roman legion returned home in joy and triumph than their old enemies rushed with greedy jaws upon the fold which was left without a shepherd. Spurred on by the strength of oarsmen, and their sails full of wind, they broke through the boundaries and spread slaughter on every side. Like mowers reaping the ripe corn, they cut down, trampled, and overran the whole country.

And now again the Britons sent suppliant ambassadors, with their garments torn and their heads covered in ashes, to implore assistance from the Romans. Like frightened chicks crowding under the protecting wings of their parents, they begged that their wretched country might not altogether be destroyed, and that the Roman name, which was now but an empty word, might not become a thing of reproach, even to distant nations. The Romans, moved by compassion at the ambassadors' account of such horrors, hastened, like eagles in flight, to send forth unexpected bands of cavalry by land and sailors by sea. Soon these plunged their terrible swords into the necks of their enemies and mowed them down like autumn leaves; like a mountain brook swollen by numerous streams after storms, bursts its banks with a roar, its foaming crest and yeasty waves rising to the clouds and dazzling the eye with its whirling currents, so did our illustrious

defenders vigorously drive the enemies hordes beyond the sea, if indeed any could escape them. For it was beyond those same seas that they, with no one daring to resist them, had heaped up the plunder they greedily piled up year after year.

Therefore the Romans left the country, giving notice that they could no longer be harassed by such arduous expeditions, nor suffer the Roman army's standards, that is, an army of such size and character, to be harassed on land and sea on account of such unwarlike, plundering vagabonds. Rather, they urged the islanders to accustom themselves to arms and to fight bravely with all their might to protect their country, property, wives, and children, and, what is dearer than all these, their liberty and lives. They should not allow their hands to be bound by a nation which was no more powerful than they themselves, unless they [the Britons] were made effeminate by idleness and sloth; they should instead arm themselves with shields, swords, and spears, and be ready for battle. And, because [the Romans] thought this would also benefit the people they were leaving, with the help of the miserable natives and with public and private contributions, they built a wall different from the first, extending in a straight line from sea to sea, between cities which had perhaps been built there out of fear of enemies. They then gave bold counsel to the fearful natives, and left them patterns to use in manufacturing arms. Moreover, on the south coast where they had been accustomed to anchor their ships, and to which it was feared the barbarians might return, they erected towers at set intervals which commanded a good view of the sea. Then they left the island, never to return.

No sooner were they gone than the Picts and Scots, like dark swarms of worms which leave their narrow holes in the midday heat, hastily landed again with their ships. . . . Having heard of the departure of our [Roman] friends, and their resolution never to return, they became bolder than ever, and seized the whole northern part of the country as far as the wall, to the exclusion of the inhabitants. To oppose them, there was placed atop the wall a garrison which proved equally slow to fight and ill adapted to run away, a useless and panic-stricken company who slumbered away days and nights on their unprofitable watch. Meanwhile the barbed weapons of the naked enemies were not idle, and with them our wretched countrymen were dragged from the wall and dashed to the ground. Such premature death, however, painful as it was, saved them from seeing the miserable sufferings of their brothers and children.

Why should I say more? They left their cities, abandoned the protection of the wall, and dispersed themselves in flight more desperately than before. The enemy, on the other hand, pursued them

with more unrelenting cruelty than before, and butchered our countrymen like sheep, so that their lives were like those of savage beasts. For they even turned their arms upon each other, and, stealing from the fellow countrymen for the sake of a little sustenance, stained their hands with each other's blood. Thus foreign calamities were worsened by domestic strife, and as a result the whole country was stripped of its provisions, except what could be obtained by hunting.

Again, therefore, the wretched remnant, sent to Agitius [probably Flavius Aetius, military commander of the Western Empire], a powerful Roman citizen, addressing him as follows: "To Aetius, now consul for the third time, come the groans of the Britons." A little later they continued: "The barbarians drive us to the sea; the sea throws us back on the barbarians. Thus two modes of death await us: we are either slain or drowned." The Romans, however, could not assist them, and in the meantime the humiliated people, wandering in the woods, began to suffer from a terrible famine. This compelled many of them, without delay, to give themselves up to their cruel persecutors in order to obtain subsistence; others, however, hiding in mountains, caves, and woods, constantly sallied out to renew the war. And it was then, for the first time, that they inflicted a severe defeat on the enemies who had for so many years been pillaging their country; for their trust was not in man, but in God. As the maxim of Philo goes, "We must have divine assistance when that of man fails." The boldness of the enemy was checked for a time, but the wickedness of our countrymen was not: the enemy left our people, but the people did not leave their sins.

For it has always been the custom of our nation, as it is at present, to be impotent in repelling foreign enemies, but bold and invincible in raising civil war, and bearing the burdens of sin. They are impotent, I say, in following the standard of peace and truth, but bold in their wickedness and falsehoods. The audacious invaders, therefore, returned to their winter quarters, determined to return and plunder again before too long. Then, too, the Picts for the first time seated themselves at the extremity of the island, where they afterward continued, occasionally plundering and wasting the country. During these truces, the wounds of the distressed people healed, but they were afflicted with another evil, even more venomous. No sooner were the ravages of the enemy checked than the island was overwhelmed with an extraordinary abundance, the greatest ever known, and with it grew up every kind of luxury and licentiousness. . . . Besides this vice, there arose every other to which human nature is liable, in particular that hatred of truth, and of its defenders, which still continues to destroy everything good in this island, the love of falsehood, together with its inventors, repaying virtue with crime,

showing respect to wickedness rather than goodness, preferring darkness to the sun, and welcoming Satan as an angel of light. Kings were anointed, not according to God's ordinance, but such as showed themselves more cruel than the rest; and soon after, they were put to death by those who had anointed them, without any inquiry into their merits, but because others still more cruel had been chosen to succeed them. . . .

Meanwhile, when God wished to purify his family, though they were infected by so deep a stain of evil . . . a familiar rumor, as if on wings, reached the ears of all, that their inveterate foes were rapidly approaching to destroy the whole country, and take possession of it from one end to another, as they had done before. But yet they derived no advantage from this intelligence; for, like frantic beasts, taking the bit of reason between their teeth, they abandoned the safe and narrow road which leads to salvation and rushed down the broad downhill path of vice which leads to death (cf. Matthew 7:13–14). . . .

A council was called to decide what should be done to repel the frequent and fatal invasions and pillages of the above-named peoples. . . . Then all the councilors, together with that proud tyrant Vortigern, the British king, were so blinded that to protect their country they sealed its doom, by inviting in among them, like wolves to the sheepfold, the fierce and impious Saxons, a race hateful to both God and men, to repel the invasions of the northern peoples. Nothing was ever so hurtful to our country, nothing was ever so unlucky. What palpable darkness must have enveloped their minds—what darkness desperate and cruel! They invited those very people whom, when absent, they dreaded more than death, to reside with them under one roof. *The officials of Zoan*, it is said, *are fools, giving senseless advice to Pharoah* (cf. Isaiah 19:1). A multitude of whelps came forth from the lair of this barbaric lioness, in three *cyuls*, as they call them, that is, in three warships in full sails, accompanied by favorable omens and prophecies. For it was foretold by one of their soothsayers that they would occupy the country to which they were sailing for three hundred years, and would plunder and despoil it for half of that time, or a hundred and fifty years. By invitation of the unlucky king, they first landed on the eastern side of the island, and there fixed their sharp talons, apparently to fight in favor of the island but, alas, more truly to attack it. Then their mother, finding her first brood so successful, sent a larger company of her wolfish offspring, which sailed over and joined their bastard comrades. From that time, the germ of iniquity and the root of contention planted their poison among us, as we deserved, and sent forth leaves and branches. The barbarians who were introduced to the island as soldiers, to brave (so

they said) any danger in defense of their hosts, received an allowance of provisions, which, as long as these were plentiful, stopped their doggish mouths. Yet they began to complain that their monthly supplies were not sufficient, and sought out every opportunity for a quarrel, saying that unless they were treated more generously they would break their treaty and plunder the whole island. In a short time, they followed up their threats with deeds.

For the fire of vengeance, justly kindled by former crimes, spread from sea to sea, fed by the hands of our foes in the east, and did not cease until, after destroying the intervening towns and lands, it reached the other side of the island and dipped its savage red tongue in the western ocean. . . . All the buildings were leveled by blows of the battering rams, and all those who worked the land, together with the Church's bishops and priests, mowed down while the sword gleamed and the flames crackled around them on every side. . . .

Some of the miserable remnant who had fled to the mountains were overtaken and murdered in great numbers; others, constrained by famine, yielded themselves to their foes to be slaves ever afterward, running the risk of being instantly slain (which was truly the greatest favor that could be done them); some others passed beyond the sea with loud lamentations, singing "You have given us up like sheep to be eaten, You have scattered us among the Gentiles" (Psalms 43:12). Others, trusting their continually endangered lives to mountains, crags, dense forests, and rocky shores, remained in their country with trembling hearts. But meantime, an opportunity arose: when those most cruel robbers had returned home for a time, the poor remnants of our nation . . . strengthened by God, and calling upon him with all their hearts, as the poet says, "Burdening heaven with their innumerable prayers," lest they be utterly destroyed, took up arms under the leadership of Ambrosius Aurelianus, a modest man, who was the last of all the Roman nation left alive in the confusion of this troubled period. His parents, who had been adorned with the purple for their merits, had been slain in these upheavals, and now his offspring has shamefully degenerated in our own day. But those who provoked their cruel conquerors won victory through the goodness of our Lord.

After this, sometimes our countrymen won the field, sometimes our enemies did, so that our Lord, in his customary way, might test his Israelites' love for him in this land. So it went until the year of the siege of Badon Hill, when almost the last, though not the least, slaughter of our cruel foes took place. This was, as I am certain, forty-four years and one month after the landing of the Saxons, as well as the year of my birth. And yet to this day the cities of our country are still not inhabited as they were before, but lie desolate, abandoned

and overthrown, since, although our foreign wars have ceased, our civil conflicts still continue.

Questions: How does Gildas describe the end of Roman rule and the advent of the Anglo-Saxons? To what does Gildas attribute the "ruin" of Britain? How does his Christian worldview inform his interpretation of events? How might a Roman or an Anglo-Saxon observer have told this story?

2. Letters on the Gregorian Mission

While Christianity made significant inroads in Roman Britain, little is known of the history of the English Church in the fifth and sixth centuries. An early medieval legend states that when Pope Gregory I (r. 590–604) saw some blond English boys in a Roman slave market, he protested that they were "not Angles but angels" and determined to save the souls of this faraway people, whom he assumed to be pagans. If the story is likely apocryphal, the importance of Gregory's efforts to bring England into the Roman Church cannot be doubted. Gregory's first mission to the kingdom of Kent, which was placed under the leadership of the Roman monk Augustine, was a great success, due in part to the Kentish Queen Bertha's support for Christianity; on Christmas Day in 597, Augustine reported to Gregory, some ten thousand English pagans, including King Æthelbert of Kent (r. ca 580–ca 616), accepted baptism. In 601, Gregory sent a second party of missionaries, including the monk Mellitus, to build on Augustine's success. We can see that in the time between Gregory's composition of the first letter below, to Æthelbert, and his dispatch of the second letter, a revised set of missionary instructions to Mellitus (sent after the missionaries by messenger), the pope's thinking about methods of conversion had changed somewhat.

Source: trans. A.M. Sellar, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of England* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1917), pp. 66–71; revised.

Pope Gregory I to King Æthelbert of Kent, 601

To the most glorious lord, and his most excellent son, Æthelbert, king of the English, from Bishop Gregory. Almighty God elevates good men to rule over nations, so that he might bestow the gifts of his loving kindness on their subjects through them. This we know to have come to pass in the English nation, over whom your highness was placed, so that by means of the blessings which are granted to you, heavenly

benefits might also be conferred on your subjects. Therefore, my illustrious son, carefully guard the grace which you have received from the divine goodness, and be eager to spread the Christian faith among the people under your rule. Let your zeal for their conversion increase, suppress the worship of idols, overthrow the structures of the temples, edify your subjects with the purity of your life, exhorting, terrifying, winning, correcting, and showing yourself as an example of good works, that you may obtain your reward in heaven from him, whose name and the knowledge of whom you have spread abroad upon earth. For he, whose honor you seek and maintain among the nations, will also render your majesty's name more glorious even to posterity.

For even so in earlier times did the most pious emperor, Constantine, after rescuing the Roman commonwealth from the false worship of idols, subject it and himself to almighty God, our Lord Jesus Christ, and turned to him with his whole mind, together with the nations under his rule. As a result, his praises exceeded the fame of former princes, and he surpassed his predecessors in renown as much as in good works. Now, therefore, let your highness hasten to impart the knowledge of one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to the kings and peoples subject to you, so that you may surpass the ancient kings of your nation in praise and merit, and, as you wipe out your subjects' sins, you will be freed from anxiety about your own sins before the dread judgment of almighty God.

Willingly hear, devoutly perform, and studiously retain in your memory whatever counsel you receive from our most reverend brother, Bishop Augustine, who is trained in the monastic rule, full of the knowledge of holy Scripture, and, by God's help, endowed with good works. The more intently you listen when he speaks on behalf of almighty God, the sooner will almighty God hear his prayers for you. But if—God forbid!—you scorn his words, how will almighty God hear him on your behalf, when you neglect to hear him on behalf of God? Therefore, unite yourself to him with all your mind, in the fervor of faith, and support his endeavors by that virtue which God has given you, that he whose faith you receive and maintain in your kingdom may allow you to partake in his own.

Besides, we would have your highness know that, as we read in the almighty Lord's words in holy Scripture, the end of this present world, and the kingdom of the saints, which will never come to an end, is near at hand. But as the end of the world draws near, many new things will take place: changes in the air, terrors from heaven, unseasonable tempests, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes in various places. These things will not all occur in our time, but will all come to pass after our days. If, therefore, you perceive any of these

things happening in your country, let your mind not be disturbed in any way; for these signs of the end of the world are sent before, so that we will be mindful of our souls, be watchful for the hour of death, and may be found prepared with good works to meet our judge. This much, my illustrious son, I have said in a few words, with the intent that when the Christian faith is spread abroad in your kingdom, our discourse to you may be fuller, and we may wish to say more as joy in the full conversion of your nation increases in our mind.

I have sent you some small gifts, which will not appear small to you, when received by you with the blessing of the blessed apostle, Peter. May almighty God, therefore, perfect in you the grace which he has begun to bestow, and prolong your life here for many years to come, and in the fullness of time receive you into the congregation of the heavenly country. May the grace of God preserve you in safety, my most excellent lord and son.

Pope Gregory I to Abbot Mellitus, 601

To his most beloved son, the abbot Mellitus from Gregory, the servant of the servants of God. We have been much concerned, since the departure of our people that are with you, because we have received no account of the success of your journey. Nevertheless, when almighty God has led you to the most reverend Bishop Augustine, our brother, tell him what I have long been considering in my own mind concerning the matter of the English people: the temples of the idols in that nation should not be destroyed; rather, let the idols that are in them be destroyed, and let water be consecrated and sprinkled in the said temples, then let altars be erected and relics placed there. For if those temples are well built, it is necessary that they be converted from the worship of devils to the service of the true God, so that the nation, seeing that their temples are not destroyed, may remove error from their hearts, and knowing and adoring the true God, may the more freely resort to the places to which they have been accustomed to worship. And because they are accustomed to slaughter many oxen in sacrifice to devils, some solemnity must be given them in exchange for this. On the feast day of the church's dedication, or the feasts of the holy martyrs whose relics are there deposited, they should build themselves huts of the boughs of trees near those churches which have been turned to that use from being temples, and celebrate the solemnity with religious feasting, and no more offer animals to the devil, but rather kill cattle and glorify God in their feast, and return thanks to the giver of all things for their abundance. To this end, while some outward gratifications are retained, they may the more

easily consent to the inward joys of the faith. For there is no doubt that it is impossible to cut off every thing at once from their rude natures; because he who endeavors to ascend to the highest place rises by degrees or steps, not by leaps. Thus, although the Lord made himself known to the people of Israel in Egypt, he allowed them to turn to his own worship the sacrifices which they were accustomed to offer to the Devil, commanding them to kill animals as a sacrifice to him, so that with changed hearts they might give up one part of the sacrifice while retaining another. Although the animals were the same as those they were accustomed to offering, now that they offered them to the true God, and not to idols, they would no longer be the same sacrifices. Dearly beloved, it is fitting that you communicate this to our aforesaid brother Augustine, so that he may consider in his current circumstances how he is to order all things. God preserve you in safety, most beloved son.

Questions: How did Gregory propose to convert the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity? In what respects is Gregory's advice to Æthelbert and Mellitus different, and how might we explain those differences? Which set of strategies do you think would be more successful—those outlined in the first letter or the second?

3. Laws of Æthelbert of Kent

According to the Venerable Bede, Æthelbert of Kent (r. ca 580–ca 616) was not only the first Anglo-Saxon king to embrace Christianity but the first to "follow the advice of wise persons" and issue written laws "after the Roman model." While the precise relationship between conversion and law-giving remains obscure, Augustine and his fellow missionaries may have been among the "wise persons" who influenced the king's decision. At the same time, the code likely reflects long-standing customs, such as the payment of compensation (sometimes called wergeld*) to victims and their kin, which predated the arrival of Christianity and existed among other Germanic peoples in this period. Æthelbert's laws influenced those of later rulers such as Alfred the Great, and continued to be read and copied for centuries. It is not only the earliest surviving English law code but also the oldest extant Old English text.*

Source: trans. F. Attenborough, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), pp. 5, 7, 9, 15; revised.

These are the dooms [sentences] which King Æthelbert established in the lifetime of Augustine.

1. Theft of property belonging to God and the Church will be compensated twelve-fold; a bishop's property eleven-fold; a priest's property nine-fold; a deacon's property six-fold; a clerk's property three-fold. Breach of the peace will be compensated two-fold when it affects a church or a meeting place.
2. If the king calls his men to him, and anyone molests them there, he will pay double compensation, as well as 50 shillings to the king.
3. If the king is feasting at anyone's house, and any sort of offense is committed there, the offender will pay double compensation.
4. If a freeman robs the king, he will repay the amount nine-fold.
5. If one man slays another in the king's dwelling, he will pay 50 shillings as compensation.
6. If a man slays a freeman, he will pay 50 shillings to the king as compensation.
7. If a man slays a smith in the king's service, or a messenger of the king, he will pay the ordinary *wergeld* [the fine for killing a man].
8. The [fine for violating the] king's *mundbyrd* [protection] will be 50 shillings.
9. If a freeman robs a freeman, he will pay a three-fold compensation, and the king will take either the fine or all of the offender's goods.
10. If a man lies with a maiden belonging to the king, he will pay 50 shillings as compensation.
11. If she is a grinding slave, he will pay 25 shillings as compensation. If she is of the third class [of slaves], he will pay 12 shillings compensation.
12. 20 shillings will be paid for killing the king's *fedesl* [one who is fed by the king].
13. If one man slays another in a nobleman's dwelling, he will pay 12 shillings as compensation.
14. If a man lies with a nobleman's serving maid, he will pay 12 shillings as compensation.

15. The [fine for violating] the *mundbyrd* of a commoner will be 6 shillings.

16. If a man lies with a commoner's serving maid, he will pay 6 shillings as compensation; if with a slave of the second class, he will pay 50 *sceattas* [a small silver coin weighing the same as a grain of barley and worth roughly 1/20 of a shilling]; if with one of the third class, 30 sceattas.

17. If a man is the first to break into another man's dwelling, he will pay 6 shillings as compensation. He who comes next will pay 3 shillings as compensation; and each who comes afterward will pay 1 shilling.

18. If one man supplies another with weapons during a quarrel, but no injury is inflicted, he [who lent the weapons] will pay 6 shillings as compensation.

19. If highway robbery is perpetrated [with the borrowed weapons], he [who lent them] will pay 6 shillings as compensation.

20. If a man is slain [with the borrowed weapons], he [who lent them] will pay 20 shillings as compensation.

21. If one man slays another, the ordinary *wergeld* will be 100 shillings.

22. If one man slays another, he will pay 20 shillings before the grave is closed, and the whole of the *wergeld* within 40 days.

23. If a [man who has committed] homicide leaves the country, his relatives will pay half the *wergeld*.

24. If a man binds a freeman, he will pay 20 shillings as compensation.

25. If a man slays the dependent of a commoner, he will pay 6 shillings as compensation.

26. If a man slays a freeman of the highest class, he will pay 80 shillings; if he slays one of the second class, he will pay 60 shillings; [if he slays one of] the third class, he will pay 40 shillings.

27. If a freeman breaks the fence surrounding [another man's] enclosure, he will pay 60 shillings as compensation.

28. If he seizes any property inside, the man will pay a three-fold compensation.

29. If a freeman enters a fenced enclosure, he will pay 4 shillings

as compensation.

30. If one man slays another, he will pay the *wergeld* with his own money and property which, whatever its nature, must be free from blemish.

31. If a freeman lies with the wife of [another] freeman, he will pay his *wergeld* as compensation, and procure a second wife with his own money, and bring her to the other man's home.

32. If anyone damages the enclosure of a dwelling, he will pay according to its value.

33. For seizing a man by the hair, 50 *sceattas* will be paid as compensation.

34. If a bone is laid bare, 3 shillings will be paid as compensation.

35. If a bone is damaged, 4 shillings will be paid as compensation.

36. If the outer covering of the skull is broken, 10 shillings will be paid as compensation.

37. If both are broken, 20 shillings will be paid as compensation.

38. If a shoulder is disabled, 30 shillings will be paid as compensation.

39. If the hearing of either ear is destroyed, 25 shillings will be paid as compensation.

40. If an ear is struck off, 12 shillings will be paid as compensation.

41. If an ear is pierced, 3 shillings will be paid as compensation.

42. If an ear is lacerated, 6 shillings will be paid as compensation.

43. If an eye is knocked out, 50 shillings will be paid as compensation.

44. If the mouth or an eye is disfigured, 12 shillings will be paid as compensation.

45. If the nose is pierced, 9 shillings will be paid as compensation.

. . .

73. If a freeborn woman with long hair misconducts herself, she will pay 30 shillings as compensation.

74. Compensation [for injury] to be paid to an unmarried woman will be made on the same scale as that paid to a freeman.

75. Compensation to be paid for violation of the *mund* [bride-

price] of a widow of the best class of the nobility will be 50 shillings. For violation of the *mund* of a widow of the second class, 20 shillings; of the third class, 12 shillings; of the fourth class, 6 shillings.

76. If a man takes a widow who does not belong to him, double the value of her *mund* will be paid. If, however, there is dishonesty, she will be taken back to her home, and the money will be returned to him.

77. If a man buys a maiden, the bargain will stand, if there is no dishonesty. If, however, there is dishonesty, she will be taken back to her home, and the money will be returned to him.

78. If she bears a living child, she will have half the goods left by her husband, if he dies first.

79. If she wishes to depart with her children, she will have half the goods.

80. If the husband wishes to keep [the children], she will have a share of the goods equal to a child's.

81. If she does not bear a child, [her] father's relatives will have her goods, as well as the morning-gift [the present given by husband to wife on the morning following the marriage].

82. If a man forcibly carries off a maiden, [he will pay] 50 shillings to her owner, and afterward buy the owner's consent.

83. If she is betrothed, at a price, to another man, 20 shillings will be paid as compensation.

84. If she is brought back, 35 shillings will be paid as compensation, as well as 15 shillings to the king.

Questions: What are the main concerns of the king as lawgiver? What hierarchies are acknowledged and reinforced by the laws? In what ways are women and slaves disadvantaged, and in what respects are they protected? Why is there so much emphasis on the payment of compensation to victims and their families?

4. Bede on the Conversion of King Edwin of Northumbria

In the decades following the Gregorian mission's arrival, many Anglo-Saxon rulers and their retainers embraced Roman Christianity. One such was King Edwin of Northumbria (r. 616–33), whose colorful conversion narrative was written

down by the monastic historian Bede a century later in his Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, a monumental work of salvation history and our main source for events in England between 597 and 731. Although Bede has tailored Edwin's story to the demands of his larger narrative, his account is suggestive of the interrelationship of religion and politics in early Anglo-Saxon England.*

Source: trans. A.M. Sellar, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of England* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1917), pp. 102–5, 112–21, 130–31; revised.

At this time the nation of the Northumbrians, that is, the English tribe dwelling on the north side of the River Humber, received the faith along with their king, Edwin, through the preaching of the aforementioned Paulinus. Edwin, as a reward for receiving the faith, and in token of his share in the heavenly kingdom, received an increase of his temporal realm, for he subjected to his dominion all the borders of Britain that were provinces either of the English, or of the Britons, something which no British king had ever done before, and in the same manner he subjected to the English the Isles of Man and Anglesey. . . .

The occasion of this nation's embracing the faith was King Edwin's alliance by marriage with the kings of Kent, for he had taken to wife Æthelburh, otherwise called Tata, daughter of King Æthelbert. When Edwin first sent ambassadors to ask for her hand in marriage of her brother Eadbald, who then reigned in Kent, he was answered, "It was not lawful to marry a Christian maiden to a pagan husband, lest the faith and the mysteries of the heavenly king be profaned by her union with a king who was altogether a stranger to the worship of the true God." When this answer was brought to Edwin by his messengers, he promised that he would in no way oppose the Christian faith which the virgin professed, but would give permission to her, and all who accompanied her to his court, be they men or women, priests or ministers, to follow their faith and worship after the custom of the Christians. Nor did he refuse to accept that religion himself, if, after the matter was considered by wise men, it was found to be more holy and more worthy of God. So the virgin was promised, and sent to Edwin, and, in accordance with the agreement, Paulinus, a man beloved of God, was ordained bishop, to accompany her, and by daily exhortations and celebration of the heavenly mysteries, to strengthen her faith and that of her company, lest they be corrupted by the company of pagans. Paulinus was ordained bishop by the archbishop Justus, on 21 July, in the year of our Lord 625, and so he came to King Edwin with the aforesaid virgin as an attendant on their union in

the flesh. . . .

The next year there came into the province an assassin, called Eumer, sent by the king of the West Saxons, whose name was Cuichelm, to lie in wait for King Edwin in hopes of depriving him of his kingdom and his life. He had a two-edged dagger, dipped in poison, so that if the wound inflicted by the weapon were not sufficient to kill the king, the deadly venom might do so. Eumer came to the king on the first day of Easter, at the River Derwent, where there was then a royal town, and being admitted as if to deliver a message from his master, while he was unfolding his pretended message in an artful manner, he suddenly rose up, and drawing the dagger from under his garment, assaulted the king. When Lilla, the king's most beloved minister, saw this, having no buckler at hand to protect the king from death, he immediately interposed his own body to receive the blow. But the enemy struck with such force that he wounded the king through the body of the murdered thegn [a high-ranking official]. Being then attacked on all sides with swords, Eumer also impiously slew another of Edwin's thegns whose name was Forthhere.

On that same holy night of Easter Sunday, the queen had given birth to a daughter, called Eanfled. The king, in the presence of Bishop Paulinus, gave thanks to his gods for the birth of his daughter; the bishop, on the other hand, began to give thanks to Christ, and to persuade the king, that by his prayers to him he had obtained the queen's safe and relatively painless delivery. The king, delighted with his words, promised, that in case God would grant him life and victory over the king who had sent the assassin Eumer, he would renounce his idols and serve Christ. As a pledge that he would fulfill his promise, he delivered up that same daughter to Paulinus, to be consecrated to Christ. She was the first to be baptized of the Northumbrian nation, and she received baptism on Whitsunday, along with eleven others of her family. At that time, the king, having recovered from the wound he had received, raised an army and marched against the nation of the West Saxons. In this war, he either slew or subdued all those whom, he had been informed, had conspired to murder him. So he returned victorious to his own country, but he would not embrace the mysteries of the Christian faith immediately, without taking counsel, though he had ceased to worship idols when he had promised to serve Christ. He first took heed to be instructed at length in the knowledge of faith by the venerable Paulinus, and to confer with those whom he knew to be the wisest of his leading men, inquiring what they thought should be done. And being a man of great natural wisdom, he often sat alone by himself a long time in silence, but deliberating in the depths of his heart how he should proceed, and to which religion he should adhere.

. . .

A heavenly vision, which the divine mercy was pleased to reveal to the king [Edwin], when he was in exile [years earlier] at the court of Rædwald, king of the Angles, strongly encouraged him to embrace and understand the doctrines of salvation. . . . The vision was this. When King Æthelfrid, his predecessor, was persecuting him, he for many years wandered in secret through several places and kingdoms, and at last came to Rædwald, whom he begged to protect him against the snares of his powerful persecutor. Rædwald willingly admitted him, and promised to perform what he requested. But when Æthelfrid understood that Edwin had appeared in that province, and that he and his companions were hospitably entertained by Rædwald, he sent messengers to offer that king a great sum of money to murder him, but to no avail. He sent messengers a second and a third time, bidding more and more each time, and threatening to make war on Rædwald if he refused. Rædwald, either terrified by his threats, or swayed by his gifts, complied with his request, and promised either to kill Edwin or deliver him up to the ambassadors. A trusted friend of his who observed this went into Edwin's chamber, where the latter was going to bed, for it was the first hour of the night, and calling to him, revealed what King Rædwald had promised to do. Edwin's friend added, "If, therefore, you are willing, I will this very hour conduct you out of this province and lead you to a place where neither Rædwald nor Æthelfrid will ever find you." Edwin answered, "I thank you for your good will, yet I cannot do what you propose, and be the first to break the compact I have made with so great a king, when he has done me no harm, nor shown any enmity to me. On the contrary, if I must die, let it be by his hand rather than by that of any lesser man. Where should I now flee to escape my enemies, when I have been a vagabond through all the provinces of Britain for so many long years?" His friend went away, and Edwin remained alone. Sitting before the palace with a heavy heart, he began to be overwhelmed by many thoughts, not knowing what to do or which way to turn.

When he had remained a long time in silent anguish of mind, brooding over his misfortunes, all of a sudden in the dead of night he saw approaching him a person whose face and habit were strange to him, at the sight of whom he was not a little frightened. Coming close, the stranger saluted him, and asked why he sat there alone on a stone awake at that time of night, when all others were fast asleep. Edwin, in turn, asked what it was to him, whether he spent the night indoors or out. The stranger replied, "Do not think that I am ignorant of the cause of your grief, your watching, and sitting alone outside. For I know for certain who you are, and why you grieve, and the evils which you fear will soon befall you. But tell me, what reward would

you give the man who delivers you from these troubles, and persuades Rædwald neither to harm you himself, nor to deliver you up to be murdered by your enemies?" Edwin replied that he would give that person all that he was able for so great a favor. The stranger then added, "What if he also assured you that your enemies would be destroyed, and ruling as king you would surpass in power not only all your own ancesters, but all those who have reigned before you in the English nation?" Edwin, encouraged by these questions, did not hesitate to promise that he would give a fitting reward to anyone who could confer such benefits upon him. Then the other said, "But if he who foretells that these great blessings are to befall you, could also give you better and more profitable counsel for your life and salvation than any of your forefathers or kindred ever heard, do you consent to submit to him, and to follow his good counsel?" Edwin did not hesitate to promise that he would completely follow the directions of that man who should deliver him from so many calamities, and raise him to a throne. Having received this answer, the man who talked to him laid his hand on Edwin's head, saying, "When you receive this sign, remember our conversation, and do not delay to do what you have just promised." Having uttered these words, he is said to have immediately vanished, and the king perceived that it was not a man but a spirit that had appeared to him.

While the royal youth still sat there alone, glad of the comfort he had received, but seriously pondering who his visitor had been, and from where he had come, his friend returned to him, and saluting him with a pleasant countenance said, "Rise, go inside, and compose yourself to sleep without fear; for the king has changed his mind, and now he intends to do you no harm, but rather to keep faith with you. For when he had privately told the queen of his intention to do what I told you before, she dissuaded him, reminding him it was unworthy of so great a king to sell a good friend in distress for gold, and to sacrifice his honor, which is more valuable than all other ornaments, for the love of money. In short, the king did as he was advised, and not only refused to deliver the banished man to his enemy's messengers, but helped Edwin recover his kingdom. For as soon as the messengers had returned home, Rædwald raised a mighty army to make war on Æthelfrid, who, meeting him with much inferior forces (for Rædwald had not given him time to gather all his men), was slain on the borders of the kingdom of Mercia, on the east side of the river that is called Idle. In this battle, Rædwald's son, called Rægenhere, was killed. Thus Edwin, in accordance with the prophecy he had received, not only escaped the danger from his enemy but succeeded the king on the throne.

King Edwin still put off receiving the word of God through the

preaching of Paulinus, and, it was said, often sat alone for several hours, seriously pondering what he should do, and what religion he should follow. One day the man of God came to him, laid his right hand on his head, and asked whether he knew that sign. The king, trembling, was ready to fall down at his feet, but Paulinus raised him up, and speaking to him like a friend said, “Behold, by God’s aid you have escaped the hands of the enemies whom you feared. Behold, you have obtained through his bounty the kingdom which you desired. Take heed not to put off fulfilling your third promise; embrace the faith, and keep the precepts of him who, delivering you from worldly adversity, has raised you to the honor of a worldly kingdom. And if, from this time forward, you will obey his will, which he makes known to you through me, he will also deliver you from the everlasting torments of the wicked, and allow you to partake of his eternal kingdom in heaven.”

The king, hearing these words, answered that he was both willing and bound to receive the faith that Paulinus taught, but that he would confer about it with his chief friends and advisers, so that if they shared his opinion, they could all be consecrated to Christ in the font of life together. Paulinus consented, and the king did as he had said; holding a council with the wise men of his kingdom, he asked each of them what he thought of this doctrine previously unknown to them, and the new worship that was preached. The chief of his own priests, Coifi, immediately answered him, “O king, consider what this is which is now preached to us. I truly declare to you that the religion that we have previously professed has no virtue in it and no profit. For none of your people has applied himself more diligently to the worship of our gods than I, and yet there are many who receive greater favors from you, and are preferred above me, and are more prosperous in all that they undertake. Now if the gods were good for anything, they would rather advance me, who has been more careful to serve them. Therefore, if upon examination you find those new doctrines, which are now preached to us, to be better and more efficacious, we must hasten to receive them without any delay.”

Another of the king’s chief men, approving of his words and exhortations, added, “O king, compared to that time which is unknown to us, the life of man upon earth seems to me like the swift flight of a sparrow through the room where you sit at supper in winter, with your ealdormen and thegns, while the fire blazes and warms the hall, but the wintry storms of rain or snow rage outside. The sparrow, flying in through one door and immediately out through another, is safe from the wintry storm while he is inside, but after a short space of fair weather, he immediately vanishes out of your sight, passing from winter into winter again. So this life of man appears for a

little while, but of what is to come or what went before we know nothing at all. If, therefore, this new doctrine tells us something more certain, it seems justly to deserve to be followed." The other elders and king's counselors, by divine inspiration, spoke to the same effect.

Coifi added that he wished to hear Paulinus speak more about the God whom he preached. When this had been done by the king's command, Coifi, hearing his words, cried out, "I have long since been sensible that there was nothing in that which we worshipped, because the more diligently I sought after truth through that worship, the less I found it. But now I freely confess that such truth appears in this preaching as can confer upon us the gifts of life, of salvation, and of eternal happiness. And so I advise, O king, that we instantly abjure and set fire to those temples and altars which we have consecrated without reaping any benefit from them." In short, the king publicly gave his license to Paulinus to preach the Gospel, and renouncing idolatry, declared that he would receive the faith of Christ. Then he asked the high priest who should first profane the altars and temples of their idols, along with their enclosures. Coifi answered, "I should. For who can more properly destroy those things that I worshipped through ignorance? Through the wisdom which has been given me by the true God, I wish to serve as an example to all others." Then immediately, in contempt of his former superstitions, he asked the king to give him arms and a stallion, and mounting the stallion, he set out to destroy the idols. Before it was not lawful for the high priest either to carry arms, or to ride on any horse but a mare. Having, therefore, girded on a sword, and taking a spear in his hand, he mounted the king's stallion and proceeded to the idols. The multitude, beholding it, concluded he was mad, but he lost no time, for as soon as he drew near the temple he profaned the building by casting his spear into it. Then, rejoicing in the knowledge of the worship of the true God, he commanded his companions to burn down the temple and all its enclosures. This place where the idols were is still to be seen, not far to the east of York beyond the river Derwent, and is now called Godmunddingaham, where the high priest, by the inspiration of the true God, profaned and destroyed the altars which he had himself consecrated.

Therefore King Edwin, with all the nobles of the nation, and a large number of the common people, received the faith and were baptized in the eleventh year of his reign, which is the year of the incarnation of our Lord 627, and about one hundred and eighty after the coming of the English into Britain. He was baptized at York, on the holy day of Easter, being 12 April, in the church of Saint Peter the Apostle, which he himself had built of timber while he was a catechumen receiving instruction in the faith prior to baptism. He also

appointed his instructor and bishop, Paulinus, to the see of that city. But as soon as he was baptized, under Paulinus's direction he built on the same spot a larger and nobler church of stone, which enclosed that same oratory which he had first erected. Having laid the new building's foundation, he began to build the church square, encompassing the former oratory. But before the walls were raised to the proper height, the wicked assassination of the king left that work to be finished by his successor Oswald. For the next six years, that is, until the end of Edwin's reign, by his consent and favor Paulinus preached the word of God in that country, and all who were preordained to eternal life believed and were baptized. . . . It is reported that the fervor of the faith, and the desire for the washing of salvation among the nation of the Northumbrians was then so great, that once when Paulinus accompanied the king and queen to their royal seat, which is called Adgefrin, he stayed there with them thirty-six days, fully occupied in catechizing and baptizing. During these days, from morning till night, he did nothing but instruct the people who had come from various villages and places, in Christ's saving word, and when they had been instructed, he washed them with the water of absolution in the River Glen, which is close by. . . .

Questions: Why did Edwin convert? What might Anglo-Saxon rulers gain or lose by becoming Christian? What do we learn about the politics of religion in the early Anglo-Saxon world, and about the roles of women and bishops in the conversion process?

5. An Anglo-Saxon Burial: The Ely "Princess"

Given the paucity of written records from early medieval Britain, historians must use archaeological evidence to supplement textual sources. From the excavation of numerous Anglo-Saxon cemeteries we have gained a better understanding of the material world and the daily lives and physical health of early medieval men and women. The 2006 excavation of a small seventh-century cemetery at Westfield Farm, just southwest of Ely in Cambridgeshire, uncovered fourteen graves surrounding a central, set-apart burial of an individual of high status. This grave belonged to a young girl about ten to twelve years old, buried in an east–west orientation, her arms neatly crossed, and surrounded by a rich assemblage of grave goods (detailed below). She was in generally good health, though she suffered from dental enamel hypoplasia, indicating she had suffered a serious illness, infection, or period of malnourishment, in early childhood. Her diet consisted mostly of plants, grains, and meat from herbivores, as well as an

above-average amount of freshwater fish. It has been suggested that she had some connection to the nearby double-monastery at Ely, founded by Queen Etheldreda in 673.

Source: S. Lucy et al., "The Burial of a Princess? The Late Seventh-Century Cemetery at Westfield Farm, Ely," *The Antiquaries Journal* 89 (2009): 85–91 (including figs. 3a–b).

List of grave goods (numbers correspond to those on drawings below):

1–9. Necklace components: silver hemispherical pendants (1–2, 4, 6–9); gold pendant with a stirrup-shaped cabochon garnet setting and filigree border (3); and cross-shaped gold pendant with filigree border (5). All were originally mounted on a cord in a symmetrical arrangement.

10–11. Silver pin and 2-inch silver chain

12–14. Contents of a hardwood casket: matching pair of blue-green glass palm cups with outfolded rims, 4.7 inches in diameter, possibly made in Kent (12–13); and composite comb with decorative markings and copper-alloy suspension ring (14)

15–18. Items originally suspended from a belt: small iron knife with 3.6-inch blade, surrounded by fragments of a leather sheath (15); iron attachment ring (16); triangular iron fire striker with fragments of a leather tinder-pouch (17); and iron padlock key, looped at the top to attach to a ring

19. Iron padlock from wooden casket

20–33. Iron handle and fittings from casket

In addition, fragments of folded cloth of various weights were associated with the body. These included a lightweight fabric that was probably a veil or mantle, perhaps originally secured with the silver pin (no. 10), and a heavier fabric of patterned wool, likely a dress.

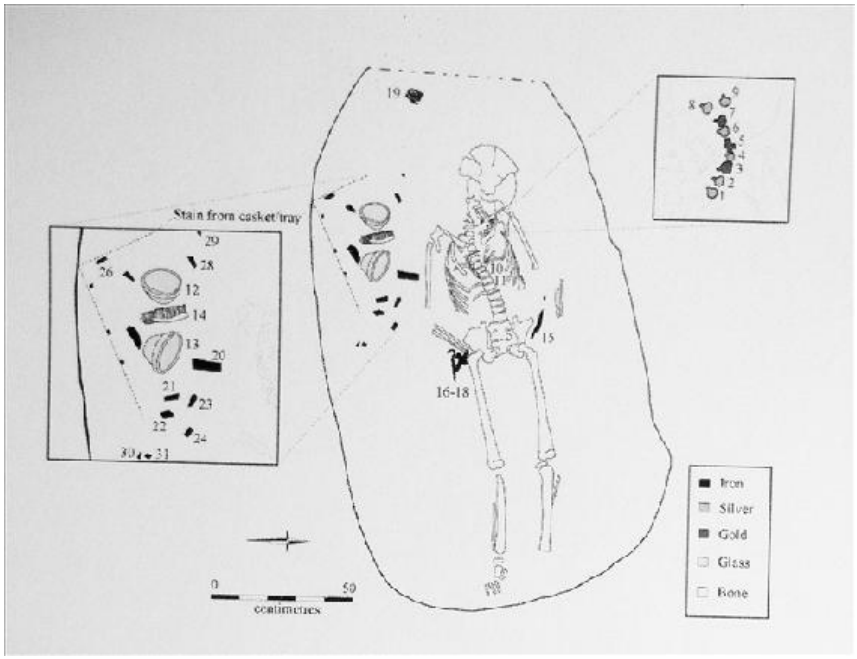

Fig. 2. Plan of the grave of the "Ely princess," showing placement of the skeleton and grave goods.

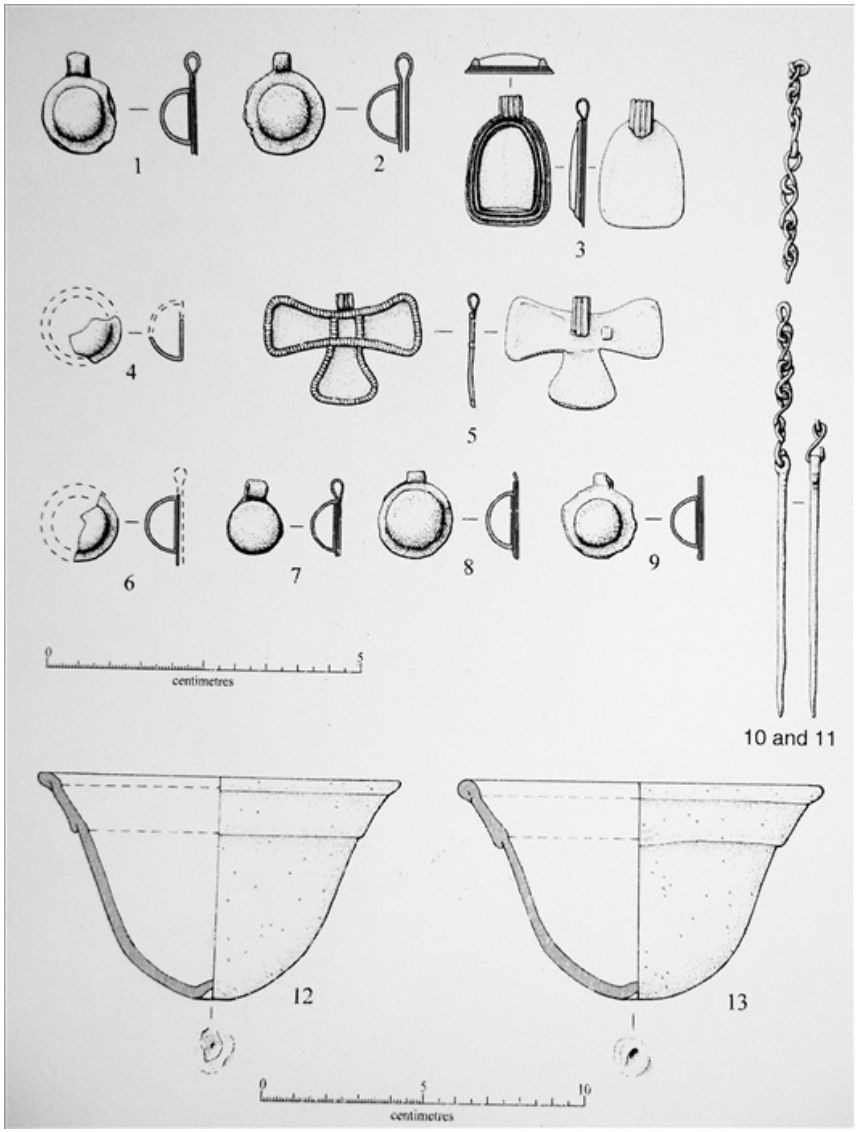

Fig. 3. Detailed drawings of grave goods. Necklace, silver pin and chain, and palm cups.

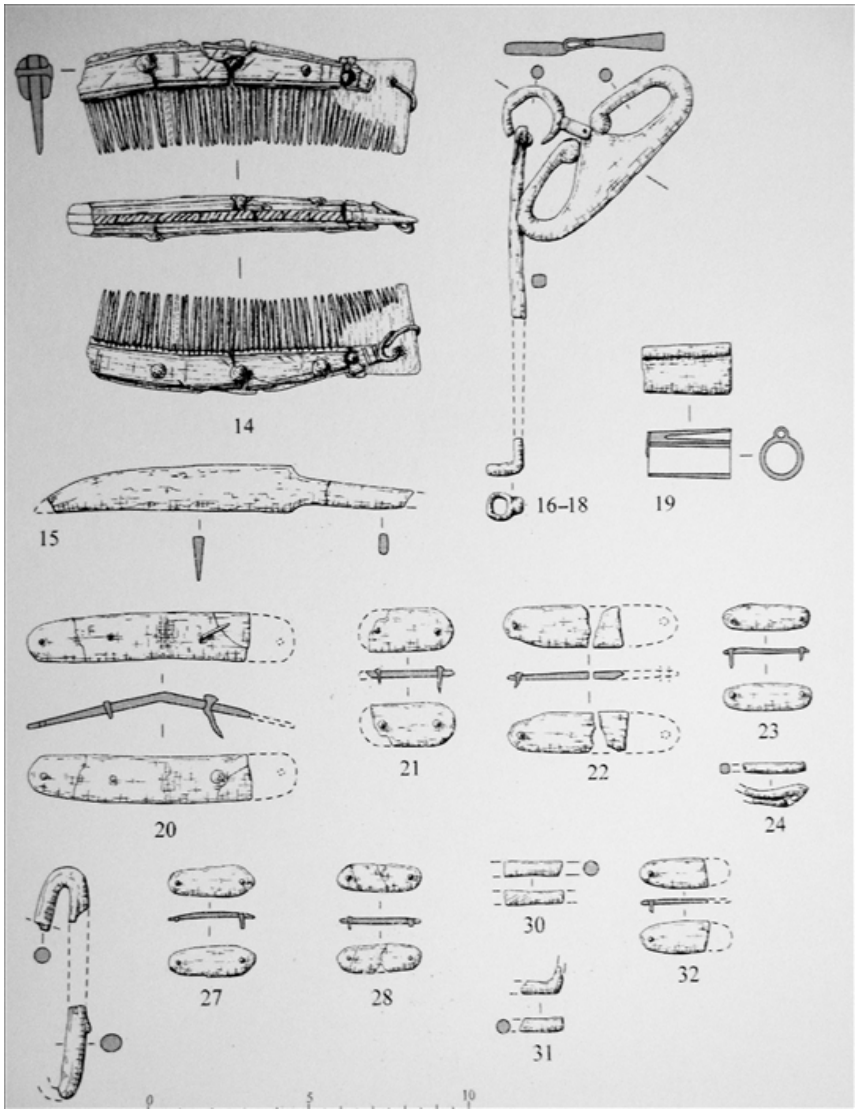

Fig. 4. Detailed drawings of grave goods. Items originally suspended from a belt.

Questions: Which objects are practical, and which merely decorative? How would these objects have broadcast this girl's status to her contemporaries? What can we infer from the grave goods about the daily activities and responsibilities of elite young women in this period?

6. Riddles from the Exeter Book

The ninety-five Anglo-Saxon riddles preserved in the tenth-

century Exeter Book build on a much older Latin tradition of enigmata*, but are even more enigmatic; full of ambiguities and surreal imagery, they do not provide solutions (leaving modern scholars to disagree about the solutions of quite a few of them). The riddles borrow imagery from animals and the natural world, from everyday objects and activities, and from Christian symbolism, evoking the Anglo-Saxon world in rich, if sometimes mysterious, word pictures. The four below are relatively easy by Anglo-Saxon standards. Solutions to the first three are printed at the end; the solution to the fourth riddle is up to you to guess.*

Source: trans. C. Williamson, *A Feast of Creatures: Anglo-Saxon Riddle-Songs* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), pp. 19, 72, 84, 90.

Head down, nosing—I belly the ground.
Hard snuffle and grub, I bite and furrow—
Drawn by the dark enemy of forests,
Driven by a bent lord who hounds my trail,
Who lifts and lowers me, rams me down,
Pushes on plain, and sows seed.
I am a ground-skulker, born of wood.
Bound by wizards, brought on wheel.
My ways are weird: as I walk one flank
Of my trail is gathering green, the other
Is bright black. Through my back and belly
A sharp sword thrusts; through my head
A dagger is stuck like a tooth: what I slash
Falls in a curve of laughter to one side
If my driving lord slaves well.

Once I was a plain warrior's weapon
—
Now a stripling prince wraps my
body
With bright twists of silver and gold.
Sometimes men kiss me, or carry me
to battle
Where I call my lord's companions
to wage war.
Bright with jewels, I am borne by a
horse
Over hard plains, sometimes by the
sea-stallion
Over storm waves. Sometimes a
woman,
Ring-adorned, fills my breast for the
table—
Later I lie stripped of sweet treasure,
Hard and headless on the long
boards.
Clothed in gold, I may grace the
wall
Where men sit drinking, a soldier's
gem.
Wound with silver, I sometimes ride
A warrior's horse, swallowing
soldier's breath,
Blasting battle-song. Sometimes I
bring
Bold men to wine, sometimes I sing
caution
Or rescue thieves' catch or scatter
foes
For my lord. Say what I am called.

A life-thief stole my world-strength,
Ripped off flesh and left me skin,
Dipped me in water and drew me
out,
Stretched me bare in the tight sun;
The hard blade, clean steel, cut,
Scraped—fingers folded, shaped me.

Now the bird's once wind-stiff joy
Darts often to the horn's dark rim,
Sucks wood-stain, steps back again
—
With a quick scratch of power,
tracks
Black on my body, points trails.
Shield-boards clothe me and
stretched hide,
A skin laced with gold. The bright
son
Of smiths glistens on me in filigree
tones.
Now decorative gold and crimson
dye,
Cloisoned jewels and a coat of glory
Proclaim the world's protector far
and wide—
Let no fool fault these treasured
claims.
If the children of men make use of
me,
They will be safer and surer of
heaven,
Bolder in hearth, more blessed in
mind,
Wiser in soul: they will find friends,
Companions and kinsmen, more
loyal and true,
Nobler and better, brought to new
faith—
So men shall know grace, honor,
glory,
Fortune, and the kind clasp of
friends.
Say who I am—glorious, useful to
men,
Holy and helpful from beginning to
end.

Middle-earth is made lovely in
unmatched ways
Rich and rare. I saw a strange

creature
Riding the road, weird craft and
power
From the workshops of men. She
came sliding
Up on the shore, shrieking without
sight,
Eyes, arms, shoulders, hands—
Sailed on one foot over smooth
plains—
Treasure and haul. Her mouth in the
middle
Of a hoard of ribs, she carries corn-
Gold, grain-treasure, wine-wealth.
The feast-floater brings in her belly
food
For rich and poor. Let the wise who
catch
The drift of this riddle say what I
mean.

Questions: What knowledge do the riddles assume on the part of their original audience? What can we learn from the texts about the Anglo-Saxons' world and values? Why might riddles have appealed to early medieval people?

Answers to the first three riddles: plough, horn, book

7. Slavery in Anglo-Saxon England

The presence of a sizeable unfree population in Anglo-Saxon England is attested in law codes, wills, manumission documents, sermons, and miracle collections. Men, women, and children could be enslaved as prisoners of war, in payment for debts, or punishment for certain crimes, and slaves constituted a significant portion of the labor pool through the eleventh century. The growing influence of the Church, which increasingly frowned on slavery, and the transformation of landholding conditions under the Normans led to the end of slavery in England by the twelfth century. The manumission documents below, as well as two stories from the miracles of Saint Swithun compiled at Winchester in the 970s, are suggestive of the varied experiences of slaves and of elites' often ambivalent attitudes toward slavery.

Sources: trans. D. Whitelock, *English Historical Documents*, Vol. 1: *c. 500–1042* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955), pp. 561–62; miracles, trans. M. Lapidge, *The Cult of St Swithun* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), pp. 289–91, 309–11.

Manumission of Eadhlem by King Athelstan, 925

After he first became king, Athelstan immediately freed Eadhelm. Ælfheah the priest and the community, Ælfric the reeve, Wulfnoth the White, Eanstan the prior, and Byrnstan the priest were witnesses of this. He who averts this—may he have the disfavor of God and of all the relics which I, by God's mercy, have obtained in England. And I grant the children the same that I grant to the father.

Manumission of Slaves for King Edgar (r. 942–75)

These are the names of the men—Sulleisoc, Ourduythal—whom the clerics of Saint Petroc's monastery freed for the soul of King Edgar on the altar of Saint Petroc on the festival of Saint Michael [29 September], before these witnesses: Brihtsige the priest, Osian the priest, Austius the lector, Riol the deacon.

Putrael Establishes His Free Status, Later Tenth Century

Here it is made known in this book that Ælfric, Ælfwine's son, wished to subject Putrael to him as a slave. Then Putrael came to Boia and begged for his intercession with his brother Ælfric. Then Boia settled the suit with Ælfric, namely that Putrael gave to Ælfric eight oxen [worth £1, the price of a slave] at the church door at Bodmin, and gave 60 pence to Boia for his advocacy, and made himself and his offspring forever free and secure from contention from that day on as regards Ælfric and Boia and all Ælfwine's children and their offspring in this witness: Isaac the priest, Wunning the priest, Sæwulf the priest, Godric the deacon, Cufure the prior, Wincuf, Wulfweard, Gestin the bishop's steward, Artaca, Kinilm, Godric Map, Wulfgar, and more good men.

A Miracle Concerning the Slave-Girl of Teoð ic the Bell-Founder

At precisely the same time, a certain slave-girl had been bound up in iron shackles and detestable manacles, because of a small transgression, by her master at Winchester; she was being detained in order to be punished on the morrow with a cruel flogging and some lashes. She did not cease, during the whole night, from beseeching

God with profuse tears that he free her from her wicked torturer through the intercession of the holy bishop [Swithun]. Moreover, when the dawn of the day was brightening on which she ought to have been afflicted with the severe punishment, her shackles fell from her feet amid her prayers and laments. She thus escaped immediate danger, and with her master still sleeping she fled to the tomb of the holy bishop [in the cathedral of Winchester], her hands still in manacles. Then it was revealed to her master by certain people that the aforementioned slave-girl had fled to the holy servant of God, and that she had been freed from her shackles through her welfare. When he heard this, he was moved by extreme anger, and with great haste he went to the place; yet not by his will but through God's constraint he released the manacles and allowed the girl who had been shackled to go home unharmed; and he did her no harm because of that misdeed.

A Miracle Concerning a Slave Who Carried Red-Hot Metal in His Bare Hand

Thereafter, during these times under discussion, a certain merchant by the name of Flodoald—a man who was wise in worldly affairs and very rich—had a slave whom he loved a good deal. This slave was apprehended by the king's reeve (who was called Eadric of Calne) because of a certain misdeed, and was ordered to be detained by royal thegns until his lord could come and until the slave would carry in his hands, without hesitation, an iron bar made red-hot by coals. And if he were innocent [as would be shown if, after three days, his burned hands had begun to heal cleanly], he would be released without punishment; if he were found to be guilty [if his burns became infected or discolored], he would undergo capital punishment. When his master heard, therefore, that the servant was being detained in chains under cruel custody, he went there as quickly as he could, and implored the king's reeve to waive the ordeal and to keep the aforementioned servant himself under the conditions pertaining to a slave. The king's reeve—not countenancing these promises but exulting overmuch in his secular authority—ordered the slave to carry a hot mass of iron. When he heard this the owner became extremely anxious about his slave (who was certain to die), and again promised to Eadric the king's reeve that he would give him a pound of pure silver and likewise hand over the slave in question into the reeve's possession, begging only that he drop the unjust charges, since he could not suffer the embarrassment of so great a disgrace, namely, that his slave should be executed for a trivial crime and offense. What is more, the saddened friends and kinsmen of the convicted man

promised immense gifts to the king's reeve, desiring greatly to free their kinsman from an ignominious death. The reeve, however, refused their requests and compelled the man in question to carry in his hand a searing piece of iron of considerable size, glowing red-hot from much coal. When the man, compelled by the reeve, took it hesitantly in hand, immediately an immense burn filled the entire palm of his scorched hand with its swelling. His hand was sealed up in the usual manner until the third day. On the second day, however, Flodoald summoned the man and found him condemned and guilty. Moved with extreme anguish for the condemned man, Flodoald called his brother and his companions who were there and got ready to go home, since—as I stated earlier—he could not patiently bear to see his servant undergo capital punishment in his presence. Why more words? The owner himself, in company with his entire retinue, implored the creator of all things in a humble prayer to liberate that man from an ignominious death through the intercession of Saint Swithun. . . . When in due course the second day (after he had carried the iron) had passed, and the sun was unfolding the third day, the man was taken before the king's reeve, so that all the thegns who were present might see if he were innocent of the alleged crime. Why do I draw this out with many words? When they had arrived in the presence of the judges, his very enemies judged the man to be guiltless . . . and the sorrow of his friends was turned to joy. For it was marvelous beyond belief that the man's supporters saw the blister and swelling—whereas the prosecutors saw the hand to be as well healed as if it had never touched the heated metal. . . . And the man to whom the aforesaid slave had belonged, donated him to the same blessed bishop who had snatched him from the dreadful danger of an odious death.

Questions: What role did the Church play in manumitting and protecting slaves? What motivated owners to free their slaves? How did owners treat their slaves? What, if any, recourse did slaves have against abusive owners?

8. Treaty between King Alfred the Great and Guthrum

In 865 the Vikings who had raided England for several decades shifted to conquest and occupation. Within a decade, Vikings had conquered the kingdoms of Northumbria, East Anglia, and Mercia, leaving only Wessex, which teetered on the brink of defeat until King Alfred's decisive victory over the Danes at Edington in 878. After negotiating the Danish withdrawal from

Wessex and the baptism of the Danish leader Guthrum, Alfred continually worked to contain the Viking threat and reclaim Danish-held lands. This treaty, drawn up ca 886, confirmed the boundaries between what is presciently termed the "English nation" and Scandinavian zones of influence to the north and east, while also revealing the permeability of those boundaries.

Source: trans. F.L. Attenborough, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), pp. 99, 101.

These are the terms of peace which King Alfred and King Guthrum, and the counselors of all the English nation, and all the people who dwell in East Anglia, have agreed upon and confirmed with oaths, on their own behalf and for their subjects, both living and unborn, who are anxious for God's favor and ours.

1. First, as to the boundaries between us. These shall run up the Thames, and then up the Lea, and along the Lea to its source, then in a straight line to Bedford, and then up the Ouse to Watling Street.

2. Secondly, if a man is slain, whether he is an Englishman or a Dane, all of us will place the same value on his life—namely, 8 half-marks of pure gold, with the exception of commoners who occupy tributary land, and freedmen of the Danes. These also will be valued at the same amount—namely, 200 shillings—in either case.

3. If anyone accuses a king's thegn of homicide, if he dares to clear himself, he must do so by the oaths of twelve other king's thegns. If anyone accuses a man who belongs to a lower order than that of king's thegn, he must clear himself by the oaths of eleven of his equals and one king's thegn. And this law will apply to every suit which involves an amount greater than 4 mancuses [gold coins worth 40d. each]. And if the accused dares not defend himself, he must pay three times the amount at which the stolen property is valued.

4. Every man must know his warrantor [seller who guarantees his merchandise] when he buys slaves, or horses, or oxen.

5. And we all declared, on the day when the oaths were sworn, that neither slaves nor freemen should be allowed to pass over to the Danish host without permission, and neither should any of them be allowed to come to us. If, however, it happens that any of them wishes to trade with us, or we with them, in chattels or goods, it will be allowed on the condition that

hostages are given as security for peaceful behavior, and as evidence that no treachery is intended.

Questions: Does the treaty envision English and Danish societies as being separate or blended? Would these terms provide a strong basis for peace? Why or why not? To what extent would they encourage assimilation between the two groups?

9. Alfred the Great's Preface to the *Pastoral Care*

Soon after King Alfred (r. 871–99) learned to read Latin, his biographer Asser reports, he resolved to translate edifying works into his native tongue in order to make them known to the majority of his people who lacked knowledge of Latin. One of the books he translated into the West Saxon dialect was the Book of Pastoral Care*, a manual for bishops written in the sixth century by Pope Gregory I, the same pope who had sent Roman missionaries to Kent in 596. Alfred had copies of his translation sent to all of the bishops of his kingdom, along with filigreed gold pointers meant to aid readers in following the book's words. The following preface, which Alfred composed to accompany the work, frames his translation project within the context of an intellectual and moral decline in England in the aftermath of the Viking invasions.*

Source: trans. A.S. Cook and C.B. Tinker, *Select Translations from Old English Prose* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1908), pp. 101–4; revised.

This book is for Worcester. King Alfred greets Bishop Werfrith lovingly and with friendship. I let it be known to you that it has very often come into my mind what wise men there formerly were throughout England, and what happy times there formerly were throughout England, and how the kings who ruled over the nation in those days obeyed God and his ministers, how they preserved peace, morality, and order at home, and at the same time enlarged their territory abroad, and prospered both in war and in wisdom. The sacred orders were zealous then, both in teaching and learning, and in all the services they owed to God; foreigners then came to this land in search of wisdom and instruction, whereas now we would have to bring them from abroad if we wished to have them. So general was the decay of learning in England that there were very few on this side of the River Humber—and, I believe, not many beyond the Humber—who could understand their rituals in English, or translate a letter from Latin into English. There were so few learned men that I cannot remember a single one living south of the Thames when I came to the

throne. Thanks be to almighty God that we have teachers among us now! And therefore I command you to do what I believe you are willing to do, and disengage yourself from worldly matters as often as you can, in order to apply the wisdom that God has given you wherever you can.

Consider what punishments would come upon us on account of this world, if we neither loved wisdom ourselves nor allowed other men to obtain it: we should love only the name of Christian, and few of the virtues associated with it. When I considered all this, I remembered also that I saw, before it had been all ravaged and burned, how the churches throughout the whole of England were filled with treasures and books, and there was a great multitude of God's servants, but they had very little knowledge of books; they could not understand anything in them because they were not written in our language. It was as if they had said, "Our forefathers, who formerly held these places, loved wisdom, and through it they obtained wealth and bequeathed it to us. In this we can still see their tracks, but we cannot follow them, and therefore we have lost both the wealth and the wisdom because we would not follow their example with our hearts." When I remembered all this, I greatly marveled that the good and wise men who were formerly found throughout England, and who had read all the books, had not wished to translate them into their own language. But again I soon answered myself and said, "They did not think that men would ever be so careless, and that learning would so decay; thus they abstained from doing so, since they wished that in this land wisdom might increase along with our knowledge of languages."

Then I remembered how the Law was first known in Hebrew, and again, when the Greeks had learned it, they translated the whole of it into their own language, and all other books besides. And again the Romans, when they had read them, translated them all into their own language by means of learned interpreters. And also all other Christian nations translated a part of them into their own language. Therefore it seems better to me, if you agree, for us also to translate some books that are most necessary for all men to know into the language that we can all understand, and for you to do what we very easily can do if we have sufficient peace. That is, all the free youths now living in England who are rich enough to devote themselves to it, should be set to learn as long as they are not fit for any other occupation, until they are able to read English writing well; and afterward let those who are to continue in learning, and be promoted to a higher rank, be taught more in the Latin language. When I remembered how the knowledge of Latin had formerly decayed throughout England, and yet many could read English writing, I began, amidst many different troubles of

this kingdom, to translate into English the book which is called in Latin *Pastoralis*, and in English *The Shepherd's Book*, sometimes word for word, and sometimes according to the sense, as I had learned it from Plegmund my archbishop, and Asser my bishop, and my mass-priests Grimbald and John. And when I had learned it as I could best understand it, and as I could most clearly interpret it, I translated it into English; and I will send a copy to every bishopric in my kingdom, along with a staff worth 50 mancuses in each. And I command in God's name that no man take the staff from the book, or the book from the monastery. It is uncertain how long there may be such learned bishops as there are now, when, thanks be to God, they are nearly everywhere; therefore I wish them [the books] to always to remain in their places, unless the bishop wishes to take them with him, or they be lent out anywhere, or anyone be making a copy from them.

Questions: How does Alfred account for the decline in learning in his own day? What educational reforms does he propose to remedy the situation? For Alfred, what larger purpose(s) do literacy and learning serve within the English Church and kingdom? How might Alfred's emphasis upon English as a written language affect learned culture in England?

Fig. 5. Early Medieval Warriors. Drawing from the early eleventh-century Harley Psalter (inspired by the Carolingian Utrecht Psalter) showing the importance of lances and shields in early medieval engagements like the Battle of Maldon (doc. 10).

10. The Battle of Maldon

A second Viking age inaugurated in the reign of Æthelred II (r. 978–1013, 1014–16) was characterized by large-scale expeditions sponsored by the kings of Denmark and Norway, and the payment of ever-larger tributes of danegeld*—amounting to tons of silver—to buy off the raiders. In August 991, the Essex* fyrd *(the army composed of the shire's freemen) under the local ealdorman, Byrhtnoth, challenged a party of Vikings who had pillaged several coastal towns. In the resulting battle, fought at the mouth of the River Blackwater in Maldon, the English were defeated and Byrhtnoth's head was carried off by the Vikings as a trophy. Shortly thereafter,* danegeld *was paid for the first time. Written within living memory of the battle, the poem celebrating Byrhtnoth and his fallen companions is one of the masterpieces of Old English literature.*

Source: trans. D. Scragg, *The Battle of Maldon* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1991), pp. 19–31.

Then [Byrhtnoth] commanded each
of the warriors to abandon his
horse,
to drive it away and to advance on
foot,
to concentrate on brave deeds and
bold thoughts.
When the kinsman of Offa first
realized
that the earl would not tolerate
cowardice,
he made the much loved creature fly
from his wrist,
his hawk off to the wood, and he
himself advanced to the battle;
by his action all would know that
the youth did not intend
to weaken in the fight, when he
grasped his weapons.
Similarly Eadric intended to support
his lord,
his master in the battle; he set off
then to carry

his spear to the fray; he maintained
great courage
as long as he was able to wield with
his hands
his shield and broad sword; he
fulfilled his vow
when he had need to fight close by
his lord.

Then Byrhtnoth set about drawing
up the men there,
he rode and instructed, he told the
soldiers
how they should form up and hold
the position,
and he asked that they should hold
their shields properly,
firmly with their fists, and not be at
all afraid.
When he had arrayed the troops
suitably,
he dismounted among the people
where it most pleased him to be,
where he knew his household
companions to be most loyal.

Then appeared on the opposite
bank, called out fiercely,
a messenger of the Vikings, he made
a speech,
a man who threateningly relayed
from the Vikings
a message to the earl where he
stood on the river bank:
“Bold seafarers have sent me to you,
commanded me to tell you that you
must quickly send
gold rings in return for protection.
And it is better for you all
that you should buy off this
onslaught of spears with tribute-
money
than that we should join battle so
grievously.

We need not destroy each other if
you are sufficiently wealthy:
we are prepared to establish a truce
in return for the gold.
If you who are the richest man here
decide
that you are willing to ransom your
people,
willing to give to the seafarers, in an
amount determined by them,
money in exchange for peace, and to
accept protection from us,
we are content to embark with the
taxes,
to set sail across the sea, and to keep
the peace with you all."

Byrhtnoth made a speech, he raised
his shield,
waved his slender spear, spoke out
with words,
the angry and resolute one gave him
answer:
"Sea raider, can you hear what this
army is saying?
They intend to give all of you spears
as tribute,
deadly points and tried swords,
payment in war-gear which will be
of no benefit to you in battle.
Messenger of the seamen, report
back!
Tell your people a much less
pleasing tale,
that here stands with his company
an earl of unstained reputation,
who intends to defend his
homeland,
the kingdom of Æthelred, my lord's
people and his country. They shall
fall,
the heathens in battle. It appears to
me too shameful
that you should return to your ships

with our money
unopposed, now that you thus far in this direction
have penetrated into our territory.
You will not gain treasure so easily:
spear and sword must first arbitrate between us,
the grim game of battle, before we pay tribute."

Then he ordered them to pick up their shields, the warriors to march forward,
until they all stood on the bank of the river.
Because of the water there, neither group could reach the other:
there the floodtide had come to an ebb,
the tidal streams had locked up the land. It seemed too long to them
to the time when they could wield spears against one another.
They stood there in military array on either side of the River Blackwater,
the Essex vanguard and the raiders from the boats;
not one of them could harm another
except where someone was felled by the flight of an arrow.
The tide went out. The sailors stood ready,
many Vikings, eager for battle.
Then the protector of warriors commanded to hold the causeway
an experienced soldier called Wulfstan,
as bold in war as were many of his family—he was Ceola's son;
he cut down with his spear the first man

who stepped with great daring on to
the causeway there.
With Wulfstan stood there the
fearless warriors
Ælfhere and Maccus, a brave pair
who refused to take flight from the
ford;
rather they defended themselves
staunchly against the enemy
for as long as they could wield
weapons.

When they recognized and saw
clearly
that they had come up against
unrelenting guardians of the
causeway there,
then the hateful visitors started to
use guile:
they asked to be allowed to have
passage,
to cross over the ford, to advance
their troops.
Then because of his pride the earl
set about
allowing the hateful race too much
land;
over the chill water then began to
call
the son of Byrhthelm (warriors
listened):
“Now a path is opened for you:
come quickly against us,
men at war. God alone knows
who will control the battlefield.”

Then the wolves of slaughter rushed
forward, they cared nothing for
the water,
the host of Vikings, west across the
Blackwater,
across the shining stream, they
carried their shields,
the sailors carried their lime-wood

shields on to the land.
There against the fierce ones stood ready
Byrhtnoth with his men. He commanded that with the shields
they form the phalanx, and that the company hold out
firm against the fiends. Then the fight was near,
glory in battle: the time had come
when those fated to die must fall there.
The roar of battle was lifted up there; ravens circled,
the bird of prey eager for carrion; there was bedlam in the land.
They let the file-hard spears from their hands then,
made fly the fiercely sharpened ones, the darts.
Bows were busy, shield absorbed spearhead.
The onslaught of battle was terrible; warriors fell
on either side, young men lay dead.
Wulfmær was wounded, he chose a bed of death,
Byrhtnoth's kinsman: he was with swords,
his sister's son, cruelly cut to pieces.
Recompense was paid to the Vikings there:
I heard tell that Edward slew one
mightily with his sword, he did not withhold the blow,
so that the doomed warrior fell at his feet.
His lord gave thanks to him for that,
to the chamberlain, when he had opportunity.
So the valiant ones supported one another,
the warriors in the battle, directed their minds eagerly

to which of them might first with
his spear there
wrest life from a doomed man,
soldiers with weapons. The dead fell
to the ground.

The steadfast ones held out,
Byrhtnoth encouraged them,
urged that each warrior should keep
his mind on the battle
who hoped to win glory from the
Danes.
Then one who was hardened in war
came forward, lifted up his
weapon,
his shield for defense, and moved
against the last-named man.
Equally resolute, the earl turned
toward the peasant:
each of them intended harm to the
other.

Then the warrior from the sea
dispatched a spear of southern
make
in such a way that the lord of
warriors was wounded.
Then he thrust violently with the
shield so that the spearshaft
fragmented,
and the spearhead vibrated so that it
was dislodged.
The man of battle was furious: with
a javelin he stabbed
the proud Viking who had given
him the wound.
The military man was experienced;
he made his spear pass
through the younger man's neck; his
hand guided it
so that he wrenched life from the
wicked thief.
Then he quickly dispatched another,
so that the body-armor shattered: he

was wounded in the breast
through the ringmail; at his heart stood
the deadly point. The earl was the more exultant:
the proud man roared with laughter, gave thanks to his maker
for the day's work that the Lord had given him.
Then one of the Danes impelled a dart from his hand,
made it fly from his fist, so that it traveled too far
through the noble one, the thegn of Æthelred.
By his side stood a young man not yet fully grown,
a squire in the battle, who very bravely
pulled the bloody spear from the warrior,
Wulfstan's son, Wulfmær the Younger;
he hurled that hardest of objects back again:
the point went in so that the very one was laid low
who had severely wounded his lord just then.

Then an armed man approached the earl;
he wanted to acquire that warrior's arm-rings,
the robe and gold bands, and the ornamented sword.
Then Byrhtnoth drew the sword from its sheath,
broad and with a shining blade, and struck at the corselet.
Too quickly one of the seamen prevented him,
when he disabled the earl's arm.
Then the golden-hilted sword fell to

the ground:
he could not hold the formidable
blade,
wield his weapon. Still then he
might make a speech,
the grey-haired warrior, encourage
the younger men,
bid his brave companions press
forward.
He could not then stand firmly on
his feet any longer;
he looked to the heavens.

"Thank you, O Lord of Hosts,
for all the joys which I have
experienced in this world.
Now, merciful God, I have the
greatest need
that you should grant grace to my
spirit,
so that my soul might journey to
you,
into your dominion, Lord of angels,
travel with your protection. I entreat
you
that thieves from hell should not
drag it down."
Then heathen slaves hacked him
and both the men who stood beside
him,
Ælfnoth and Wulfmær, they both lay
dead,
when they gave their lives alongside
their lord.

Then those who did not want to be
there turned from the battle:
the sons of Odda were the first in
flight there,
Godric turned from the battle, and
abandoned the brave man
who had often made him a gift of
many a horse;
he leapt on the horse that his lord

had owned,
on to the trappings, which was highly improper,
and his brothers both ran off with him,
Godwine and Godwig, they did not care for the battle,
but they turned from the fight and south to wood,
they fled into that place of safety and saved their lives,
and more men than was at all fitting,
if they had all called to mind the favors
that he had done for their benefit.
Thus Offa had said to him earlier in the day
in the assembly, when he had held a meeting,
that many there spoke bravely
who would not hold out later in time of need.

Then the head of the army had fallen,
Æthelred's earl. They all saw,
the companions of his hearth, that their lord lay dead.
Then proud followers pressed forward there,
men lacking cowardice pushed on eagerly:
they all intended then one of two things,
to lose their lives or to avenge their friend.
So the son of Ælfric urged them on,
a warrior young in years, he made a speech,
Ælfwine then said (he spoke bravely):

"Remember the times that we often

made speeches over mead,
when we raised pledges while sitting
on a bench,
warriors in the hall, about fierce
encounters:
now we can test who is brave.
I intend to make known my noble
lineage to all,
that I am of a great family among
the Mercians;
my grandfather was called
Ealhhelm,
a wise and prosperous ealdorman.
Thegns will not be able to taunt me
in that nation
that I meant to desert this militia,
to seek my homeland, now that my
leader lies dead,
cut to pieces in battle. That is the
greatest anguish for me:
he was both my kinsman and my
lord."
Then he pressed forward,
remembering his feud,
So that he might reach one with his
spear,
a seaman in the press of people, to
lay him out on the ground,
killed with his weapon. He
continued to exhort his
companions then,
his friends and comrades, that they
should press forward. . . .

Then they went forward, they did
not care about life;
the soldiers then continued fighting
fiercely,
angry spear-bearers, and prayed to
God
that they might avenge their
beloved lord
and bring destruction on their
enemies. . . .

Edward the Tall then still stood in
the van,
ready and eager; he announced
vauntingly
that he did not intend to run away
by so much as a foot of land,
to turn back, when his superior lay
dead.
He broke through the shield-wall
and fought against the warriors,
until on those seamen his treasure-
giving lord he
nobly avenged, before he lay
amongst the slain.
Æthelric did likewise, the noble
companion,
eager and anxious to press forward,
he fought determinedly,
Sibyrht's brother; and very many
others
split the decorated shield, they
defended themselves bravely.
The rim of the shield shattered, and
the body armor sang
one of the songs of terror. Then in
the battle struck
Offa the sailor so that the latter
dropped on to the earth,
And there Gadda's kinsman himself
fell to the ground.
Offa was quickly cut to pieces in the
battle,

Yet he had accomplished what he
promised his lord,
As he vowed formerly to his
treasure-giver
that they must both ride back to
their dwelling,
safe into the homestead, or die
among the Vikings,
perish with wounds on the field of
slaughter.
He lay near his lord as a thegn

should. . . .

Questions: Why did the English lose the battle? Given that Maldon was a defeat, why was it worthy of remembrance? What do we learn about tenth-century warfare, and about Anglo-Saxon martial values?

11. Labor and Daily Life from Ælfric of EYNSHAM's *Colloquy*

Providing a glimpse of the activities of ordinary people in the eleventh century, this educational text is part of an ancient tradition of such dialogues, intended as tools for teaching Latin. The author, Ælfric of Eynsham (d. ca 1010), gained prominence as an abbot, homilist, and educator. The students in this dialogue are depicted as boys living in a monastery school, whose way of life is illuminated later in the chapter.

Source: trans. A.F. Leach, *Educational Charters and Documents, 598 to 1909* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), pp. 37–47; revised, with additional material trans. E. Amt from *Ælfric's Colloquy*, ed. G.N. Garmonsway (London: Methuen & Company, 1939), pp. 21–47.

BOYS: Master, we children ask you to teach us to speak correctly, for we are unlearned and speak corruptly.

MASTER: What do you want to say?

BOYS: What do we care what we say, so long as we speak correctly and say what is useful, not old-womanish or improper?

MASTER: Are you willing to be flogged while learning?

BOYS: We would rather be flogged while learning than remain ignorant; but we know that you will be kind to us and not flog us unless you are obliged.

MASTER: I ask you what you were saying to me. What work do you do?

FIRST BOY: I am a professed monk and I sing seven times a day with the brethren and I am busy with reading and singing; and meanwhile I want to learn to speak Latin.

MASTER: What do these companions of yours know?

FIRST BOY: Some are plowmen, others shepherds, some are cowherds, some too are hunters, some are fishermen, some hawkers, some merchants, some shoemakers, some salters, some bakers of the place.

MASTER: What do you say, plowman, how do you do your work?

PLOWMAN: Oh, sir, I work very hard. I go out at dawn to drive the oxen to the field, and yoke them to the plow; however hard the winter I dare not stay at home for fear of my master; and having yoked the oxen and made the plowshare and coulter fast to the plow, every day I have to plow a whole acre or more.

MASTER: Have you anyone with you?

PLOWMAN: I have a boy to drive the oxen with the goad, and he is now hoarse with cold and shouting.

MASTER: What more do you do in the day?

PLOWMAN: A great deal more. I have to fill the oxen's bins with hay, and give them water, and carry the dung outside.

MASTER: Oh, it is hard work.

PLOWMAN: Yes, it is hard work, because I am not free.

MASTER: What do you say, shepherd? Do you have any work?

SHEPHERD: Yes, I have. First thing in the morning I drive my sheep to pasture, and I stand over them with dogs, in heat and cold, so that wolves do not devour them; and I lead them back to the sheepfolds, and I milk them twice a day. And I move their folds, and besides this I make cheese and butter. And I am faithful to my lord.

MASTER: O oxherd, what do you do?

OXHERD: My lord, I have a great deal of work. When the plowman unyokes the oxen, I lead them to pasture, and I stand over them all night watching for thieves, and early in the morning I hand them over again to the plowman well fed and watered.

MASTER: Is this man one of your companions?

BOYS: Yes, he is.

MASTER: Do you know anything?

HUNTSMAN: One craft only.

MASTER: What is it?

HUNTSMAN: I am a hunter.

MASTER: Whose?

HUNTSMAN: The king's.

MASTER: How do you practice your craft?

HUNTSMAN: I weave my nets and put them in the right place, and I train my dogs to chase wild animals, until they suddenly come to the nets and thus are trapped, and I cut their throats in the nets.

MASTER: Don't you know how to hunt without nets?

HUNTSMAN: I can also hunt without nets.

MASTER: How?

HUNTSMAN: I chase the wild animals with swift dogs.

MASTER: What kind of wild animals do you usually catch?

HUNTSMAN: I catch stags and boars and deer and goats and sometimes hares.

MASTER: Did you go hunting today?

HUNTSMAN: No, because it is Sunday, but I went hunting yesterday.

MASTER: What did you catch?

HUNTSMAN: Two stags and one boar.

MASTER: How did you catch them?

HUNTSMAN: I caught the stags in nets, and I slew the boar.

MASTER: How did you dare to slay a boar?

HUNTSMAN: The dogs drove him toward me, and standing in front of him I suddenly cut his throat.

MASTER: That was very brave of you.

HUNTSMAN: A huntsman must not be fearful, because many kinds of beasts live in the woods.

MASTER: What do you do with your game?

HUNTSMAN: I give the king everything I catch, because I am his huntsman.

MASTER: What does he give you?

HUNTSMAN: He clothes me well and feeds me; sometimes he gives me a horse or an arm-ring, so that I will more willingly exercise my craft.

MASTER: What craft do you know?

FISHERMAN: I am a fisherman.

MASTER: What do you receive from your craft?

FISHERMAN: Food and clothing and money.

MASTER: How do you catch fish?

FISHERMAN: I board a boat and put my nets in the river, and I cast my hooks and fishtraps, and I take up whatever they catch.

MASTER: What if the fish are unclean?

FISHERMAN: I throw the unclean ones out, and I take up the clean ones for myself for food.

MASTER: Where do you sell your fish?

FISHERMAN: In the city.

MASTER: Who buys them?

FISHERMAN: The citizens. I can't catch as many as I can sell.

MASTER: What kinds of fish do you catch?

FISHERMAN: Eels and pike, minnows and burbots, trout and lampreys, and whatever swims in the river. And sprat.

MASTER: Why don't you fish in the sea?

FISHERMAN: Sometimes I do, but rarely, because I need a large boat on the sea.

MASTER: What do you catch in the sea?

FISHERMAN: Herring and salmon, dolphin and sturgeon, oysters and crabs, mussels, winkles, cockles, flounder, sole, lobster, and so on.

MASTER: Do you want to catch a whale sometime?

FISHERMAN: No, I don't.

MASTER: Why?

FISHERMAN: Because catching a whale is a dangerous business. It is safer for me to go to the river with my hook, than to go whaling with many ships.

MASTER: Why is that?

FISHERMAN: Because I would rather catch a fish that I can kill than one which can drown or kill not only me but also my companions with a single blow.

MASTER: All the same, many do catch whales and escape the dangers, and they get a high price for them.

FISHERMAN: You speak the truth, but I do not dare, because of the timidity of my mind.

MASTER: What do you say, fowler? How do you ensnare birds?

FOWLER: I ensnare birds in many ways: sometimes with nets, sometimes with snares, sometimes with lime, sometimes with whistling, sometimes with a hawk, sometimes with traps.

MASTER: Do you have a hawk?

FOWLER: Yes, I have.

MASTER: Do you know how to tame them?

FOWLER: Yes, I do. What good would they be to me unless I knew how to tame them?

HUNTSMAN: Give me a hawk.

FOWLER: I will gladly give you one, if you will give me a swift dog. What kind of hawk do you wish to have, larger or smaller?

HUNTSMAN: Give me the larger one.

MASTER: How do you feed your hawks?

FOWLER: They feed themselves and me in the winter, and in the spring I send them flying free in the woods. Then I catch the young ones for myself in the autumn, and tame them.

MASTER: And why do you let the tamed ones fly away from you?

FOWLER: Because I don't want to feed them in the summer, because they eat too much.

MASTER: Still, many people feed their tame hawks over the summer, so as to have them ready again.

FOWLER: Yes, they do, but I don't want to work so hard on them, because I know I can catch others—not just one, but many more.

MASTER: What do you say, merchant?

MERCHANT: I say that I am useful to the king and to the nobles, and to the rich, and to all people.

MASTER: How so?

MERCHANT: I board a ship with my goods, and I sail across the seas and sell my stuff. And I buy precious things which are not made in this land, and bring them back here for you, at great peril on the sea, and sometimes I am shipwrecked and barely escape with my life.

MASTER: What kinds of things do you bring us?

MERCHANT: Purple cloth and silk, precious stones and gold, various clothing and perfume, wine and oil, ivory and brass, copper and tin, sulfur and glass and similar things.

MASTER: Do you wish to sell these things here for what you bought them for there?

MERCHANT: No. What good would all my work do me then? I want to sell them here for more than I bought them for there, so that I get some money, with which to feed myself and my wife and my children.

MASTER: You, cobbler, what do you do that's useful to us?

COBBLER: Indeed my craft is very useful to you, and necessary.

MASTER: How?

COBBLER: I buy skins and hides, and I prepare them by my craft, and from them I make footwear of many kinds, shoes, clogs, and boots, and buckets, and bridles and harness, and flasks and bottles, spurs and halters, bags and purses; and not one of you wants to go through a winter without the help of my craft.

MASTER: O saltmaker, what good does your craft do for us?

SALTMAKER: My craft is of great benefit to everyone. Not one of you will take delight in lunch or dinner, unless my craft is a guest there too.

MASTER: How so?

SALTMAKER: What person really enjoys pleasant food without a taste of salt? Who fills up the cellar or storehouse without my art? Look: every butter and cheese is lost to you unless I am there to guard it, and you do not enjoy even your vegetables without me. . . .

MASTER: O monk, you who spoke to me, look: I have shown that you have good and very necessary companions. Now who are these other men?

BOY: I have smiths here—the blacksmith, the goldsmith, the silversmith, the coppersmith, the carpenter, and many other workers of various crafts.

MASTER: Do you have some wise counselor?

BOY: Yes, I have. How can our congregation be governed without a counselor?

MASTER: What do you say, counselor? Which craft seems to you foremost among all these?

COUNSELOR: I tell you, the service of God seems to me to hold first place among all these crafts, as the evangelist writes: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (Matthew 6:33)."

MASTER: And which among the secular arts seems to you to keep first place?

COUNSELOR: Agriculture, because the plowman feeds all of us.

SMITH: Where does the plowman get his plowshare and coulter? He wouldn't even have his goad if not for my craft. Where does the fisherman get his hook, the cobbler his awl, the tailor his needle? Don't they all come from my work?

COUNSELOR: What you say is true, but all of us would rather be the plowman's guest than yours, because the plowman gives us bread and drink; you, what do you give us in your workshop but iron sparks and the sound of pounding hammers and blowing bellows?

CARPENTER: Which of you does not benefit from my craft, when houses and all sorts of containers and even ships are all made by me?

SMITH: O carpenter, why do you speak so, when you wouldn't be able to make even a single hole without my craft?

COUNSELOR: Oh, all you good fellows and good workers, let us end this dispute and have peace and harmony among us, and let each help the other by his craft, and let us all meet at the plowman's, where we find food for ourselves and fodder for our horses. And this is the advice I give all workmen, that each of them should do his work as well as he can, as the man who neglects his work is dismissed from his work. Whether you are a priest or a monk, a layman or a soldier, apply yourself to that, and be what you are, as it is a great loss and shame for a man not to be what he is and what he ought to be.

MASTER: Now, children, how do you like this speech?

BOYS: We like it very much, but what you say is too deep for us, and is beyond our age. But talk to us in a way we can follow so that we may understand what you are talking about.

MASTER: Well, I ask you why you are learning so diligently?

BOYS: Because we do not want to be like beasts, who know nothing but grass and water. . . .

MASTER: Well, I will do what you ask. You, boy, what did you do today?

BOY: I did many things. At night when I heard the bell, I got out of bed and went to church and sang the nocturn [part of the night office] with the brethren. Then we sang the martyrology and lauds [dawn prayer]; after that, prime [first morning office] and the seven psalms with litanies and first mass; next terce [second morning office], and did the mass of the day; after that we sang sext [midday office], and ate and drank and slept; and then we got up again and sang nones [mid-afternoon office], and now here we are before you ready to listen to what you tell us.

MASTER: When will you sing vespers [sunset office] or complin [pre-bedtime office]?

BOY: When it's time.

MASTER: Were you flogged today?

BOY: I was not, because I was very careful.

MASTER: And how about the others?

BOY: Why do you ask me that? I daren't tell you our secrets. Each one knows whether he was flogged or not.

MASTER: What do you eat each day?

BOY: At this time I eat meat, for I am a boy living under the rod [a novice monk who has not yet taken vows].

MASTER: What else do you eat?

BOY: I eat vegetables and eggs, fish and cheese, butter and beans and all fitting things, giving thanks.

MASTER: You are very voracious to eat everything that is given you.

BOY: I am not so gluttonous that I can eat all kinds of food in one meal.

MASTER: How so?

BOY: Sometimes I eat these foods, and sometimes others, in moderation, as befits a monk, not voraciously, for I am not a glutton.

MASTER: And what do you drink?

BOY: Ale, if I have it, or water if I don't have ale.

MASTER: Don't you drink wine?

BOY: I'm not rich enough to buy myself wine; and wine is not the drink of children or of the foolish, but of old and wise men.

MASTER: Where do you sleep?

BOY: In the dormitory with the brethren.

MASTER: Who calls you to nocturns?

BOY: Sometimes I hear the bell, and get up; sometimes my master wakes me with a ground-ash [walking-stick].

MASTER: All you good children and clever scholars, your teacher exhorts you to keep the commandments of God, and behave properly everywhere. Walk quietly when you hear the church bells and go into church, and bow to the holy altars, and stand quietly and sing in unison, and ask pardon for your sins, and go out again without playing, to the cloister or to school.

Questions: What can be learned about everyday life and economic conditions in Anglo-Saxon England from this dialogue? What does it tell us about the relationships between the craftspeople and their clients? How does this portrayal of monastic life compare with that in Orderic Vitalis's autobiography (doc. 24)?

12. Anglo-Saxon Wills

Anglo-Saxon law allowed great testamentary latitude to both men and women; those who were wealthy enough to compose wills could dispose quite freely of real estate and moveable goods. The wills printed here are those of a layman (Ælfhelm), a laywoman (Ælfflæd), and a churchman (Ælfric); they represent a small sample of the seventy or so wills that survive

from pre-Conquest England. Note that locations that remain unidentified are rendered in italics.

Source: trans. D. Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), pp. 31–35, 39–43, 53–55.

The Will of Ælfhelm, 975–1016

Herein is the declaration of how Ælfhelm has disposed of his property and his goods in fulfilment of his duties both to God and men. First to his lord a hundred mancuses of gold and two swords and four shields and four spears and four horses, two of them harnessed and two unharnessed.

And for his soul he grants to Saint Etheldreda's the estate at Wratting except the two hides which Ethelric has. And I grant the estate at Brickendon to Saint Peter's at Westminster, but it is my wish that when there is mast, two hundred pigs be fed for my wife's sake, to benefit whatever foundation she pleases.

And I grant to my son Ælfgar the estate at Whepstead and that at Walton for his lifetime, and after his death they are to go wherever he pleases, for the souls of both of us. And I declare what I gave to my wife as a marriage-gift, namely, Baddow and Burstead and Stratford and the three hides at Enhale. And when we first came together, I gave her the two hides at Wilbraham, and Rayne and whatever pertains to it. And I grant her Carlton and I grant her the chief messuage at Gestingthorpe, and all the possessions that are on it, including produce and men; but I grant to Godric and my daughter half the woodland and open land, except that which I grant to my priest. And I grant to my wife and my daughter half the estate at Conington, to divide between them, except the four hides which I grant to Æthelric and Ælfwold, and the half hide which I grant to my servant Osmær.

And I grant to Ælfmaer and his brother Ælfstan, to divide between them the two estates, Hatley and Potton, except what I grant to Osgar. And I grant to Godhere what I bought from Wimund. And I grant Littlebury to Leofsige after my death, on condition that the agreement which we concluded before the ealdorman shall hold good. And I grant to him and his wife the estate at Stockton for a hundred mancuses of gold, and I wish that the gold be given to my lord in payment of my heriot [death-duty].

And I grant to be divided among my three brothers the estate at Troston, except that I grant to Ælfwold that which Æthelric had. And I grant Ælfhelm the hide at Ickleton and the property at Maworth. And

I grant Wulfmær what I had at Barnham.

And for my soul's sake I grant my long-ship to Ramsey, half for the abbot, and half for the community. And I grant to my wife half the stud at Troston, and half to my companions who ride with me. And my wife is to succeed to half of what is on the woodland, and my daughter to half. And I wish that my wife shall in all cases receive half the stock at each village, whoever may succeed to the land, as it was granted to her.

Now I pray you, dear lord, that my will may stand, and that you will not permit it to be wrongfully altered. God is my witness that I was as obedient to your father as ever I could be, and thoroughly loyal in thought and in deed, and was ever faithful to you with perfect loyalty and devotion; of this God is my witness.

That man who shall alter my will (unless it be you, Sire, and I am confident that you will not), may God drive him from his kingdom, unless he will quickly alter it back again; and may God and all his saints maintain each of those who give their support that the will may stand.

Endorsed. If anyone ever alters or removes anything in this will, may God's grace and his eternal reward be taken from him for ever; and may he never be found in his favor, but be excommunicated from the society of all Christ's chosen companies, both now and in eternity, unless he will quickly desist from that and also make full restitution.

The Will of Ælfflæd, 1000–1002

Ælfflæd declares in this document how she wishes to have her property disposed of, in fulfilment of her duties to God and to men.

First I grant to my lord after my death the eight estates, namely Dovercourt, Beaumont, Alresford, Stanway, Barton, Lexden, Elmset, and Buxhall; and two armlets of two pounds in weight, and two drinking-cups and a silver vessel. And I humbly pray you, Sire, for God's sake and for the sake of my lord's [husband's] soul and for the sake of my sister's soul, that you will protect the holy foundation at Stoke in which my ancestors lie buried, and the property which they gave to it as an immune right of God for ever: which property I grant exactly as my ancestors had granted it, that is the estate at Stoke to the holy foundation with everything that belongs to the village there, and the wood at Hatfield which my sister and my ancestors gave. Then these are the estates which my ancestors bequeathed to it after my sister's lifetime and after mine: Stratford, Freston, Wiston, Lavenham, Balsdon, Polstead, Withermarsh, Greenstead, Peldon,

Mersea and the woodland at Totham which my father granted to Mersea, and Colne and Tey.

Then these are the estates which my ancestors bequeathed to other holy places: namely the estate at Eleigh to Christ Church at Canterbury for the use of the community; and the estate at Hadham to Saint Paul's minster at London as episcopal property, and the estate at Heybridge for the use of the community at Saint Paul's minster; and the estate at Baythorn for the use of the community at Barking.

And I grant Woodham after my death to Ælfthryth, my lord's mother, and after her death it is to go to Saint Mary's foundation at Barking just as it stands, with the produce and with the men. And I grant for the use of the community at Saint Edmund's the two estates of Chelsworth and Cockfield, just as my ancestors have granted them, and the estate at Nedging after the death of Crawe my kinswoman. And I grant to Mersea after my death everything that my lord and my sister granted, that is Fingringhoe and the six hides on which the minster stands. And I grant after Crawe's death the estate at Waldingfield to Saint Gregory's at Sudbury according to the agreement my sister made about it.

And I grant to Saint Peter and Saint Etheldreda and Saint Wihtburg and Saint Sexburg and Saint Eormenhild, at Ely, where my lord's body lies buried, the three estates which we both promised to God and his saints; namely, Rettendon, which was my marriage gift, Soham and Ditton, just as my lord and my sister have granted it; and the one hide at Cheveley, which my sister obtained, and the pair to the ring which was given as burial fee for my lord.

And I grant to the ealdorman Æthelmær the estate at Lawling after my death, with its produce and its men, just as it stands, on condition that during my life he shall be a true friend and advocate to me and to my men, and after my death, be a true friend and advocate of the holy foundation at Stoke, where my ancestors lie buried, and its property. And I grant the estate at Liston to Æthelmær my [lord's kinsman?] with the produce and with the men just as it stands, and humbly pray him that he will be my true friend and protector during my life, and after my death will help to secure that my will and my ancestors' wills may stand.

These are the boundaries of Balsdon: from the stream at *Humelcyrre*; from *Humelcyrre* to *Heregeresheafod*; from *Heregeresheafod* along the old hedge to the green oak; then on until one comes to the paved road; from the paved road along the shrubbery until one comes to Acton; from Acton until one comes to Roydon; from Roydon back to the stream. And there are five hides of land.

These are the boundaries of Withermarsh and Polstead: from

Loppandun to Shelley; from Shelley to the Brett; along the Brett to the Stour; along the Stour to Leofman's boundary; along Leofman's boundary to the *Amalburn*; from the *Amalburn* to *Northfield*; then on to *Bindhæcc*; from *Bindhæcc* to *Tudanhæcc*; from *Tudanhæcc* to Giffords Hall; from Giffords Hall to Nurstead, from Nurstead to *Hwitingho*; from *Hwitingho* to *Wudemannestun*; from *Wudemannestun* to Kersey boundary; from Kersey boundary to Hadleigh boundary; from Hadleigh boundary to Layham boundary; from Layham boundary back to *Loppandun*.

The Will of Archbishop Ælfric, 1003–1004

Here it is made known how Archbishop Ælfric drew up his will. First as his burial fee, he bequeathed to Christ Church the estates at Westwell and Bourne, and Risborough. And he bequeathed to his lord his best ship and the sailing tackle with it, and sixty helmets and sixty coats of mail. And if it were his lord's will, he wished that he would confirm to Saint Albans the estate at Kingsbury, and himself retake possession of *Eadulfington* in return.

And he bequeathed to Abingdon the estate at Dumbleton, and three hides of it to Ælfnoth for his life, which afterward [are to belong] to Abingdon with the rest. And he bequeathed him ten oxen and two men, and they are to be subject to the lordship to which the land belongs. And he bequeathed the estate which he bought at Wallingford to Ceolweard, and after his death to Cholsey.

And he bequeathed to Saint Albans the estate at Tew, and the terms were to remain unchanged between the abbot and Ceolric which had been agreed upon with the archbishop; namely that Ceolric was to hold the portion of the estate which he has for his life, and also that portion which the archbishop let to him in return for his money; that was seven and a half hides for five pounds and fifty mancuses of gold; and after his day all of it together is to go to Saint Albans. And their terms were that Osney also should go to that monastery after Ceolric's day. And he bequeathed to Saint Albans the estate in London which he bought with his money, and all his books he also bequeathed there and his tent.

And he arranged that what money there was should be taken and first every debt paid, and afterward what was due was to be provided for his heriot. And he granted a ship to the people of Kent and another to Wiltshire. And as regards other things besides these, if there should be any, he bade that Bishop Wulfstan and Abbot Leofric should act as seemed best to them. And the estates in the west, at Fiddington and Newton, he bequeathed to his sisters and their children. And the land of Ælfheah, Esne's son, is always to remain in his family.

And he bequeathed to Archbishop Wulfstan a pectoral cross, and a ring and a psalter; and to Bishop Ælfheah a crucifix. And in accordance with God's will he forgave the people of Kent the debt which they owed him, and the people of Middlesex and Surrey the money which he paid on their behalf. And it is his will that after his day every penally enslaved man who was condemned in his time be set free.

If anyone change this, may he have it to account for with God. Amen.

Questions: What kinds of possessions were bequeathed, and to whom? What do we learn of less rich and powerful people than the authors? What purposes do the testators seem to have in mind? How does the archbishop's will differ from those of the lay individuals? How does the woman's will differ from the men's? What similarities unite them?

13. The Cotton Anglo-Saxon World Map

The oldest extant Anglo-Saxon mappa mundi*, or "world map," probably made in Canterbury ca 1025, reveals the geographical knowledge of English elites prior to the Norman Conquest. Though measuring only about seven by eight inches, the map is extremely detailed. Its creator likely worked from lost maps of the Roman Empire's provinces and used Roman names to designate regions and cities, but was also strongly influenced by the Bible and early Christian writers. Like all early medieval maps, this one is oriented to the east, rather than the north, and is roughly centered on the Holy Land.*

Source: K. Miller, *Mappae mundi: die ältesten Weltkarten* (Stuttgart: Jos. Roth'sche Verlagshandlung, 1895), p. 33.

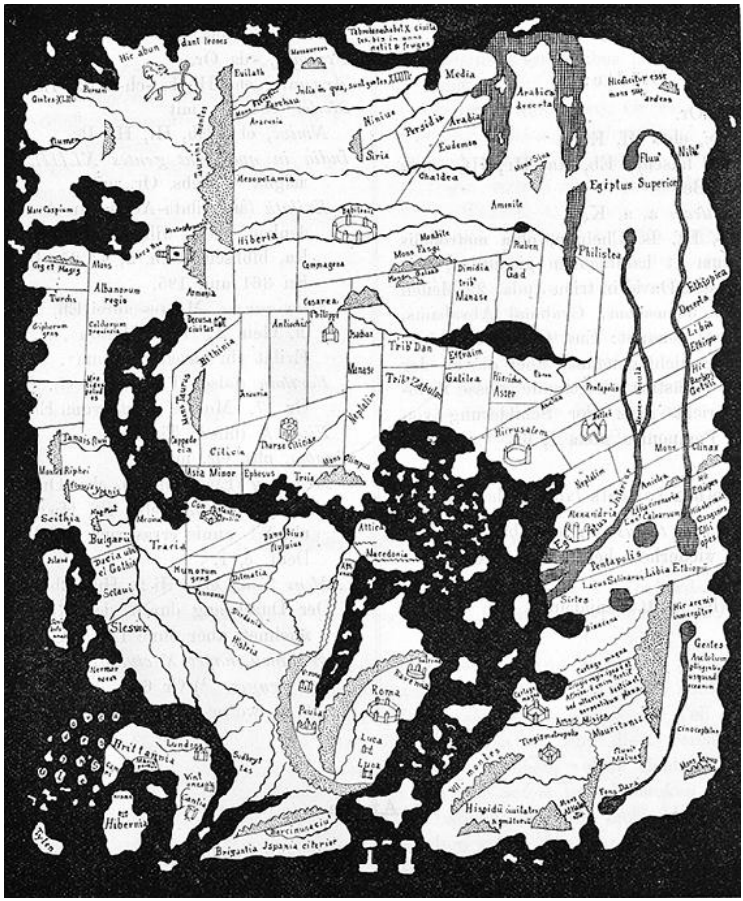

Fig. 6. The Cotton World Map, from a nineteenth-century drawing.

Questions: How is this representation of the world different from modern maps? Which regions did the map-maker lack knowledge of, and which did he depict in detail? What place-names do you recognize? What does the map reveal about the Anglo-Saxon worldview?

14. The Wolf's Sermon to the English

In 1013, two decades after the Battle of Maldon, King Æthelred II (r. 978–1013, 1014–16) was driven into exile when the Danish king Sweyn Forkbeard seized the throne. Sweyn died within the year, and Æthelred returned to England to face the anger of his thegns, resistance from Sweyn's son Cnut (the future king of England), and dissent within his own family. It was at this moment that Archbishop Wulfstan of York (r. 996–1023) delivered the following sermon. Known as the "wolf's sermon" (its title a play on the name of its author,

whose name means "wolf stone"), it laments the decay of English society and morals during the second Viking age.

Source: trans. D. Whitelock, *English Historical Documents, c. 500–1042* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955), pp. 855–59; revised.

Beloved men, realize what is true: this world is in haste and the end approaches; and therefore in the world things go from bad to worse, and so, on account of the people's sins, things must of necessity deteriorate greatly before the coming of Antichrist, and indeed it will then be dreadful and terrible far and wide throughout the world.

Understand well also that now for many years the devil has led astray this people too greatly and there has been little loyalty among men, though they spoke fair enough. Too many wrongs prevailed in the land, and there were never many men who sought after a remedy as zealously as one should; daily evil was piled on evil and wrongs and many lawless acts committed far too widely throughout all this people. Also, we have on that account suffered many losses and insults, and, if we are to experience any improvement, we must then deserve better of God than we have previously done. For we have justly deserved the miseries that oppress us, and equally must we deserve to obtain relief from God if henceforward things are to start to improve. . . .

But it is true what I say, there is need of that relief, for God's dues have dwindled too long in every district within this nation, and the laws of the people have deteriorated all too much, and sanctuaries are violated far and wide, and the houses of God are entirely despoiled of ancient privileges and stripped inside of all that is seemly. And widows are wrongfully forced into marriage, and too many are reduced to poverty and greatly humiliated. And poor men, although quite innocent, are sorely deceived and cruelly defrauded and sold far and wide out of this country into the power of foreigners; and children in the cradle are enslaved for petty theft by cruel injustice widely throughout this people. And the rights of freemen are withdrawn and the rights of slaves are restricted and charitable obligations are curtailed; in short, God's laws are hated and his precepts despised. And therefore through God's anger we all are frequently disgraced, let him perceive it who can; and this injury will become common to all this people, though one may not think so, unless God protects us.

For it is clear and manifest that we have previously transgressed more than we have amended, and therefore much is assailing this people. Things have not gone well now for a long time at home or abroad, but there has been devastation and famine, burning and bloodshed in every district again and again; and stealing and killing, sedition and pestilence, murrain and disease, malice and hate and

spoliation by robbers have harmed us very grievously, and monstrous taxes have afflicted us greatly, and bad seasons have very often caused the failure of our crops. For now for many years, as it may seem, there have been many injustices and wavering loyalties among men everywhere in this country. Now too often a kinsman does not protect a kinsman any more than a stranger, neither a father his son, nor sometimes a son his own father, nor one brother another. Nor has any one of us ordered his life as he should, neither ecclesiastics according to their rule nor laymen according to their law. But we have made desire our law all too often, and have kept neither the precepts nor laws of God or man as we should. Nor has anyone had loyal intentions toward another as justly as he should, but almost everyone has deceived and injured another by word or deed; and in particular almost everyone wrongly stabs another in the back with shameful attack—let him do more, if he can.

For here in the country there are great disloyalties both in matters of Church and state, and also here in the country there are many who are traitors in various ways. And it is the greatest of all treachery in the world that a man betray his lord's soul; and a full great treachery it is also in the world that a man should betray his lord to death, or drive him in his lifetime from the land. Both have happened in this country: Edward [the Martyr, r. 975–978] was betrayed and then killed, and afterward burned, and Æthelred [Edward's half-brother] was driven out of his country. . . .

And lo! How can greater shame befall men through God's anger than often does us for our own deserts? If any slave runs away from his master and, deserting Christianity, becomes a Viking, and after that it comes about that a conflict arises between thegn and slave, if the slave slays [his former] thegn, no *wergeld* is paid to any of his kindred; but if the thegn slays the slave whom he owned before, he shall pay the price of a thegn [because the *wergeld* of a Danish freeman equaled that of an English thegn]. Very base laws and shameful tributes are common among us, through God's anger, let him understand it who can, and many misfortunes befall the people again and again. Things have not gone well now for a long time at home or abroad, but there has been devastation and persecution in every district again and again, and the English have been for a long time now completely defeated and too greatly disheartened through God's anger. The pirates are so strong that, with God's consent, often in battle one puts to flight ten, and sometimes less, sometimes more, all because of our sins. And often ten or a dozen, one after another, disgracefully insult the thegn's wife, and sometimes his daughter or near kinswoman, while he looks on, who considered himself brave and mighty and stout enough before that happened. And often a slave

binds fast the thegn who was previously his master and makes him into a slave through God's anger. Alas for the misery, and alas for the public shame which the English now suffer, all through God's anger! Often two seamen, or maybe three, drive the droves of Christian men from sea to sea, out through this people, huddled together, as a public shame to us all, if we could seriously and rightly feel any shame. But all the insults which we often suffer we repay by honoring those who insult us. We pay them continually and they humiliate us daily; they ravage and they burn, plunder and rob. . . .

And let us do as is necessary for us, turn to the right and in some measure leave wrong-doing, and atone very zealously for what we have done amiss; and let us love God and follow God's laws and perform very eagerly what we promised when we received baptism, or those who were our advocates at our baptism; and let us order our words and deeds rightly, and eagerly cleanse our thoughts, and keep carefully oath and pledge, and have some loyalty between us without deceit. And let us often consider the great judgment to which we all must come, and save ourselves from the surging fire of hell's torment, and earn for ourselves the glories and the joys which God has prepared for those who do his will in the world. God help us. Amen.

Questions: What do we learn about the state of England in the early eleventh century? Who (or what) does Wulfstan blame for the evils of his day? Judging from Wulfstan's condemnation of contemporary English society, what would an ideal society look like to him?

15. Laws of Cnut

Anglo-Saxon England has left us many law codes. In this one, issued by King Cnut (r. 1016–40), English traditions and terminology stand side-by-side with reminders of the Scandinavian presence, a legacy first of the Viking invasions in the ninth and tenth centuries and then of the invasion and rule of Danish kings. As the laws show, the concept of wergeld *found in earlier laws such as those of Æthelbert (doc. 3) remained important in the eleventh century. This code also refers to the Anglo-Saxon* gemot*, the regular assembly of a given community. The laws printed here largely omit Cnut's extensive ecclesiastical legislation.*

Source: trans. B. Thorpe, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England* (London: Record Commission, 1840), vol. 1, pp. 377–91, 399–409, 413–42; revised.

This, then, is the secular ordinance which, by the counsel of my *witan* [advisory council], I will be observed over all England.

1. That is, then, the first that I will: that just laws be established, and every unjust law be carefully suppressed, and that every injustice be weeded out and rooted up, with all possible diligence, from this country. And let God's justice be exalted; and henceforth let every man, both poor and rich, be esteemed worthy of folk-right, and let just judgments be given to him.

2. And we instruct that though anyone sins and deeply destroys himself, let the correction be regulated so that it be becoming before God and tolerable before the world. And let him who has power of judgment very earnestly bear in mind what he himself desires, when he thus says: "And forgive us our sins, as we forgive (Luke 11:4)." And we command that Christian men be not condemned to death, on any account, for altogether too little: but rather let gentle punishments be decreed, for the benefit of the people; and let God's handiwork, and his own purchase which he dearly bought, not be destroyed for little.

3. And we command that Christian men be not too readily sold out of the land, and especially be not brought into heathendom; but let it be carefully guarded against, that those souls be not made to perish which Christ bought with his own life.

4. And we command that you undertake diligently to cleanse the country on every side, and everywhere to desist from evil deeds: and if witches or diviners, workers of secret death or adulteresses, are found anywhere in the land, let them be diligently driven out of this country; or let them totally perish in the country, unless they desist. . . .

Of Heathenism

5. And we earnestly forbid every heathenism: that is, that men worship idols, or worship heathen gods, and the sun or the moon, fire or rivers, water-wells or stones, or forest trees of any kind; or love witchcraft, or promote the working of secret death in any way, or make sacrifices to idols . . . or perform anything pertaining to such illusions.

Of Various Criminal Acts

6. Let manslayers and perjurers, violators of holy orders and adulterers, submit and make amends; or with their sins retire from the country.

7. Let cheats and liars, robbers and reavers, bear God's anger, unless they desist, and the more thoroughly amend: and whoever will lawfully cleanse the country, and suppress injustice, and love righteousness, must diligently correct such things, and shun the like. . . .

Of Currency and Measures

8. Let . . . one money pass over all the nation, without any counterfeit, and let no man refuse it; and let any who shall make false money after this forfeit the hands with which he made that false money, and not redeem them with any thing, neither with gold nor with silver: and if anyone accuse the reeve, that he made that false money by his leave, let him clear himself with a threefold purgation, and if the purgation then fails, let him have the same judgment as he who wrought the false money.

9. And let weights and measures be carefully rectified, and every species of injustice henceforth abstained from.

Of Fines Due to the King

12. These are the fines to which the king is entitled from all men in Wessex: that is, for breach of peace and house-breaking, assault, and harboring fugitives, and failure to serve in the army, unless the king honors someone by conceding these rights to him.

13. And whoever commits outlawry, let the king have power over him. And if he holds land by charter, let that be forfeited into the king's hand, no matter whose man he is. And take notice, whoever may feed or harbor the fugitive shall pay five pounds to the king, unless he clears himself that he knew nothing of his being a fugitive. . . .

15. And by Danish law he enjoys [similar rights.] And if anyone keeps or harbors an unpledged man, let him make amends for it, as was formerly the law. And he who shall henceforth set up unjust law, or make unjust judgment, for hatred or bribery, let him be liable to the king for 120 shillings, by English law, unless he dares to prove on oath that he knew nothing more just; and let him ever forfeit his thaneship, unless he repurchase it from the king, if he will allow him. And by Danish law, let him be guilty of *lah-slit* [a fine in Danish law], unless he clear

himself, that he knew no better. And he who denies just law and just judgment, let him be liable to him who is entitled to it: either to the king for 120 shillings, or to an earl for 60 shillings, or to the hundred for 30 shillings; so with every one of them, if it so happen, by English law: and he who by Danish law shall corrupt just law, let him pay *lah-slit*.

Of Courts

18. And thrice a year let there be a *burh-gemot*, and twice a year a shire-*gemot*, under penalty of the *wite* [fine], as is right; unless there be need oftener. And let there be present the bishop of the shire and the ealdorman; and there let both expound the law of God as well as the secular law. . . .

That Every Man Should Belong to a Tithing

20. And we will that every freeman be brought into a hundred, and into a tithing, who wishes to be entitled to purgation or to *wergeld*, in case anyone shall slay him after he is 12 years of age; or let him not afterward be entitled to any free rights, be he householder or follower. And that every one be brought into a hundred and in surety; and let the surety hold and lead him to every plea. Many a powerful man will, if he can and may, defend his man in whatever way it seems to him that he may the more easily defend him; whether as a freeman or a *theow* [unfree person]. But we will not allow that injustice.

Of the Bearing of Witness

21. And we will that every man above twelve years make oath that he will neither be a thief nor cognizant of theft.

22. And let every true man who has not been of bad reputation and has failed neither in oath nor ordeal within his hundred, be entitled to a single purgation. And for an untrue man, let a single oath be chosen in three hundreds, and a threefold oath as far as it belongs to the *burh*; or let him go to the ordeal, and let a single purgation be preceded by a single fore-oath, and a threefold purgation by a triple fore-oath. And if a thane have a true man to take the fore-oath for him, be it so. If he have not, let him begin his suit himself: and let no fore-oath ever be remitted. . . .

36. And if anyone swear a false oath on a relic, and is convicted, let him forfeit his hands, or half his *wergeld*; and let that be divided between lord and bishop. And let him not be thenceforth oath-worthy, unless he the more thoroughly makes amends before God, and finds surety that he will ever after abstain from the like.

37. And if anyone stand openly in false witness, and is convicted, let not his witness afterward stand for anything, but let him pay the king, or the lord of the land, according to his *heals-fang* [a portion of his *wergeld*].

Of the Killing of Clerics

39. If anyone kills a servant of the altar, let him be an outlaw to God and to men, unless he more thoroughly make amends through exile, and also to the kindred, or clears himself by a purgation; and within thirty days let him set about making amends, both to God and to men, on peril of losing all he possesses.

40. And if anyone wrongs a man in holy orders, or a foreigner, through any means, as to money or as to life, then shall the king stand in the place of a kinsman and of a protector to the victim, unless he has another lord besides. And let amends be made to the king as it may be fitting; or let him avenge the deed very deeply. It belongs very rightly to a Christian king that he avenge God's anger very deeply, according as the deed may be.

Of Men in Holy Orders

41. If a servant of the altar commits homicide, or else works iniquity very enormously, let him then forfeit both degree and country, and go in exile as far as the pope shall prescribe to him, and earnestly do penance. And if he will clear himself, let him clear himself with a three-fold purgation; and unless he begin the amends within 30 days, to God and to men, let him be an outlaw. . . .

44. If a man who has committed a crime punishable by death desires to make confession, let it never be denied him: and if anyone deny it him, let him make amends for that to the king with 120 shillings, or clear himself; let him select five [oath-helpers], and be the sixth himself. . . .

Of Widows and Maids

53. If anyone ravish a widow, let him make amends for it with his *wergeld*. If anyone ravish a maid, let him make amends for it with his *wergeld*.

Of Adultery

54. If, during her husband's life, a woman lies with another man, and it is known publicly, let her afterward be shamed in the eyes of the world, and let her lawful husband have all that she possessed; and let her then forfeit both nose and ears: and if it be a prosecution, and the purgation fail, let the bishop use his power, and judge severely.

55. If a married man lies with his own maid-servant, let him forfeit her, and make amends for himself to God and to men. And if a man has a lawful wife, and also a concubine, let no priest administer to him any of those rites which ought to be administered to a Christian man until he desists, and so deeply makes amends as the bishop may order. . . .

Of Him Who Fights in the King's Household

60. If anyone fights in the king's household, let him forfeit his life, unless the king is merciful to him.

In Case Anyone Disarm Another

61. If anyone unlawfully disarms a man, let him compensate with his *heals-fang*; and if he binds him, let him compensate with half his *wergeld*. . . .

Of the Heriot

71. And if anyone departs this life intestate, be it through his neglect or through sudden death, then let not the lord draw more from his property than his lawful heriot [death-duty]. And, according to his direction, let the property be distributed very justly to the wife, and children, and relations; to every one, according to the degree that belongs to him.

72. And let the heriots be as it is fitting to the rank. An earl's heriot is: eight horses, four saddled and four unsaddled, and

four helmets, four coats of mail, eight spears, and as many shields, four swords, and two hundred mancuses of gold. And after that, a king's thane's, from those who are nearest to him, is: four horses, two saddled and two unsaddled, two swords, four spears, and as many shields, a helmet, a coat of mail, and fifty mancuses of gold. And of the medial thanes: a horse and his trappings, and his arms, or his *heals-fang* in Wessex; and in Mercia, two pounds; and in East Anglia, two pounds. And the heriot of a king's thane among the Danes, who has his privilege from the king, four pounds. And if he has further relation to the king: two horses, one saddled and the other unsaddled, one sword, two spears, two shields, and fifty mancuses of gold: and he who is of lesser means, two pounds.

Of Widows and Marriage

74. And let every widow continue husbandless for a twelve-month: let her then choose what she herself will; and if she, within the space of a year, choose a husband, then let her forfeit her morning-gift [given by her husband when they married], and all the possessions which she had through the first husband; and let the nearest kinsmen take the land and the possessions that she had before. And let the husband be liable for his *wer* to the king, or to him to whom he may have granted it. And even if she is taken forcibly, let her forfeit the possessions, unless she be willing to go home again from the man, and never again be his. And let not a widow take the veil [to become a nun] too precipitately. And let every widow pay the heriots, *wite*-less, within twelve months, unless it be convenient to her to do so earlier.

75. And let no one compel either woman or maiden to marry a man whom she herself dislikes, nor sell her for money; unless he is willing to give anything voluntarily. . . .

Of Stolen Property

77. And if any man bring a stolen thing home, and he be detected [by the owner]; it is just that the owner have what he went after. And unless it has been brought under his wife's key-lockers, let her be clear; for it is her duty to keep the keys of them; namely, her treasury, and her chest, and her boxes. If it be brought under any of these, then she is guilty. And no wife may forbid her husband to put into his house what he will. Before now, the child which lay in the cradle, though it had

never tasted meat, was held by the covetous to be equally guilty as if it had discretion. But henceforth I most strenuously forbid it, and also very many things that are very hateful to God.

Of Him Who Flees from His Lord

78. And if a man flees from his lord, or from his comrade, by reason of his cowardice, be it in the fleet, or in the army, let him forfeit all he owns, and his own life, and let the lord seize his possessions, and his land, which he previously gave him: and if he holds land by charter, let that go into the king's hands.

Of Him Who Falls before His Lord

79. And if a man falls before his lord in the army, be it within the land, or be it without the land, let the heriots be forgiven; and let the heirs succeed to the land and the property, and divide it very justly. . . .

Of Hunting

81. And I will that every man be entitled to his hunting, in wood and in field, on his own possession. And let every one forego my hunting: take notice where I will have it untrespassed on, under penalty of the full *wite*. . . .

Questions: Using these laws in conjunction with Ælfric's Colloquy (doc. 11), how would you describe the lives of ordinary Anglo-Saxon men and women? How do the values and concerns expressed here compare with those of the earlier laws of Æthelbert (doc. 3)? What penalties are most common? What crimes are considered most serious? How are ranks and conditions of people distinguished? What do we learn of the status of women?

16. Cnut's Letter to the English People

In 1027 King Cnut accepted an invitation to attend the coronation of the new Holy Roman Emperor, Conrad II, at Rome. The trip doubled as a pilgrimage to some of the holiest sites in Christendom and enhanced Cnut's prestige as a Christian ruler while allowing him to improve relations with other European rulers. In the letter below, he reports on his activities and explains his future plans.

Source: trans. T. Forester, *The Chronicle of Florence of Worcester* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), pp. 137–39; revised.

Cnut, king of all England, and of Denmark, Norway, and part of Sweden, to Æthelnoth, [archbishop of Canterbury], and Ælfric, archbishop of York, and to all the bishops and prelates, and to the whole nation of the English, both the nobles and the commons, greeting.

I notify you that I have lately taken a journey to Rome, to pray for the forgiveness of my sins, and for the welfare of my dominions, and the people under my rule. I had long since vowed this journey to God, but I have been hitherto prevented from accomplishing it by the affairs of my kingdom and other impediments. I now return most humble thanks to my God almighty for allowing me in my lifetime to visit the sanctuary of his apostles, Saints Peter and Paul, and all others which I could find either within or without the city of Rome, and there in person reverentially worship according to my desire. I have performed this chiefly because I have learned from wise men that Saint Peter the apostle has received from God great power in binding and loosing, and carries the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and therefore I esteemed it very profitable to seek his special patronage with the Lord.

Be it known to you that, at the celebration of Easter, a great assembly of nobles was present with our lord, Pope John [XIX], and Emperor Conrad [II]; that is to say, all the princes of the nations from Mount Garganus to the neighboring sea. All these received me with honor and presented me with magnificent gifts; but more especially was I honored by the emperor with various gifts and valuable presents, both gold and silver vessels, and palls and very costly robes. I spoke with the emperor himself, and the lord pope, and the princes who were there, in regard to the wants of my people, English as well as Danes; that they should be granted more equal justice and greater security in their journeys to Rome, and that they should not be hindered by so many barriers on the road, nor harassed by unjust tolls. The emperor assented to my demands, as well as King Rudolph [of Burgundy], in whose dominions these barriers chiefly stand; and all the princes made edicts that my people, the merchants as well as those who go to pay their devotions, shall pass to and fro in their journeys to Rome in peace, and under the security of just laws, free from all molestation by the guards of barriers or the receivers of tolls. I made further complaint to my lord the pope, and expressed my great displeasure, that my archbishops are sorely aggrieved by the demand of immense sums of money, when, according to custom, they resort to

the apostolic see to obtain the pallium [the archbishop's stole]; and it is decreed that it should no longer be done. All things, therefore, which I requested for the good of my people from my lord the pope, and the emperor, and King Rudolph, and the other princes through whose territories our road to Rome lies, they have most freely granted, and even ratified their concessions by oath; to which four archbishops, twenty bishops, and an innumerable multitude of dukes and nobles who were there present, are witnesses. Wherefore I return most hearty thanks to almighty God for my having successfully accomplished all that I had desired, as I had resolved in my mind, and having satisfied my wishes to the fullest extent.

Be it known therefore to all of you, that I have humbly vowed to almighty God himself henceforth to amend my life in all respects, and to rule the kingdoms and the people subject to me with justice and clemency, giving equitable judgments in all matters; and if, through the intemperance of youth or negligence, I have hitherto exceeded the bounds of justice in any of my acts, I intend by God's aid to make an entire change for the better. I therefore adjure and command my counselors to whom I have entrusted the affairs of my kingdom, that henceforth they neither commit themselves, nor suffer to prevail, any sort of injustice throughout my dominions, either from fear of me, or from favor to any powerful person. I also command all sheriffs and magistrates throughout my whole kingdom, as they value my regard and their own safety, that they do no unjust violence to any man, rich or poor, but that all, high and low, rich or poor, shall enjoy alike impartial law; from which they are never to deviate, either on account of royal favor, respect of person in the great, or for the sake of amassing money wrongfully, for I have no need to accumulate wealth by iniquitous exactions.

Further, I wish you to know that, returning by the way I went, I am now going to Denmark to conclude a treaty for a solid peace, all the Danes concurring, with those nations and peoples who would have taken my life and crown if it had been possible; but this they were not able to accomplish, God bringing their strength to naught. May he, in his merciful kindness, uphold me in my sovereignty and honor, and henceforth scatter and bring to naught the power and might of all my adversaries. When, therefore, I shall have made peace with the surrounding nations, and settled and reduced to order all my dominions in the East, so that we shall have nothing to fear from war or hostilities in any quarter, I propose to return to England as early in the summer as I shall be able to fit out my fleet. I have sent this epistle before me in order that my people may be gladdened at my success; because, as you yourselves know, I have never spared, nor will I spare, myself or my exertions, in the needful service of my

whole people. I now therefore command and adjure all my bishops and the governors of my kingdom, by the duty they owe to God and myself, to take care that before I come to England all dues belonging to God, according to the old laws, be fully discharged; namely, plow-alms, the tithe of animals born in the current year, and the pence payable to St. Peter's at Rome, whether from towns or vills; and in the middle of August the tithes of corn; and at the feast of Saint Martin the first-fruits of grain [payable] to everyone's parish church, called in English *ciric-sceat*. If these and similar dues be not paid before I come, those who make default will incur fines to the king, according to law, which will be strictly enforced without mercy. Farewell.

Questions: What conception did Cnut have of his royal position, as expressed here and in his laws (doc. 15)? How accurately might such a letter reflect his personal piety? What do we learn about the relationship of the king of England with other European powers, and about the English Church's relationship with the pope?

17. *Praise of Queen Emma*

Queen Emma's colorful, even shocking, career is only partially described in the biographical work excerpted here. The daughter of Duke Richard of Normandy, in 1002 she married King Æthelred of England, with whom she had two sons, Alfred and the future King Edward the Confessor (r. 1042–66). When Æthelred was driven from the throne in 1014 by the invading Swein of Denmark, Emma fled to her homeland; after Swein's and Æthelred's deaths, she joined the other side, as it were, by agreeing to return and marry Swein's son King Cnut, who had been Æthelred's implacable enemy. This is the point at which The Praise of Queen Emma *introduces her, tactfully making no explicit reference to her first marriage. The biography, commissioned by Emma herself and presenting her actions in the best possible light, was written in 1041–42, by which time Emma and her family had suffered further tragedy. She had then achieved political eminence through her son by Cnut, who was reigning in England as King Harthacnut (r. 1040–42). Later, when Emma's son Edward succeeded his half-brother, Emma would find her relations with her son somewhat strained and her own position again precarious.*

Source: trans. A. Campbell, *Encomium Emmae reginae* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1949), pp. 5–7, 33–35, 39–53; revised.

Prologue

May our Lord Jesus Christ preserve you, O Queen, who excel all those of your sex in the admirability of your way of life.

I, your servant, am unable to show you, noble lady, anything worthy in my deeds, and I do not know how I can be acceptable to you even in words. That your excellence transcends the skill of anyone speaking about you is apparent to all to whom you are known, more clearly than the very radiance of the sun. You, then, I esteem as one who has deserved of me to such a degree, that I would sink to death unafraid, if I believed that my action would lead to your advantage. For this reason, and, furthermore, in accordance with your injunction, I long to transmit to posterity through my literary work a record of deeds, which, I declare, touch upon the honor of you and your connections. . . .

Swein, king of the Danes, mighty alike in courage and arms and also in counsel, brought the English kingdom under his rule by force, and, dying, appointed his son Cnut to be his successor in the same kingdom. . . .

Book II

16. Everything having been thus duly settled, [Cnut] the king lacked nothing except a most noble wife; such a one he ordered to be sought everywhere for him, in order to obtain her hand lawfully, when she was found, and to make her the partner of his rule, when she was won. Therefore journeys were undertaken through realms and cities and a royal bride was sought; but it was with difficulty that a worthy one was ultimately found, after being sought far and wide. This imperial bride was, in fact, found within the bounds of Gaul, and to be precise in the Norman area, a lady of the greatest nobility and wealth, but yet the most distinguished of the women of her time for delightful beauty and wisdom, inasmuch as she was a famous queen. In view of her distinguished qualities of this kind, she was much desired by the king, and especially because she derived her origin from a victorious people, who had appropriated for themselves part of Gaul in despite of the French and their prince. Why should I make a long story of this? Wooers were sent to the lady, royal gifts were sent, and further, precatory messages were sent. But she refused ever to become the bride of Cnut, unless he would affirm to her by oath that he would never set up the son of any wife other than herself to rule after him, if it happened that God should give her a son by him. For she had information that the king had had sons by some other woman; so she, wisely providing for her offspring, knew in her wisdom how to make arrangements in advance, which were to be to their advantage. Accordingly the king found what the lady said acceptable, and when

the oath had been taken, the lady found the will of the king acceptable, and so, thanks be to God, Emma, noblest of women, became the wife of the very mighty King Cnut. . . .

18. But why should I protract the matter? I have said that there was great joy at the union of such great persons; but I declare that there was much greater at the achievement of the advantage of a male offspring. For indeed soon afterward it was granted by the Savior's grace that the most noble queen bore a son. The two parents, happy in the most profound and, I might say, unparalleled love for this child, sent their other legitimate sons [Edward and Alfred, Emma's sons by Æthelred] to Normandy to be brought up, while keeping this one with themselves, inasmuch as he was to be the heir to the kingdom. . . .

Book III

1. When Cnut was dead and honorably buried in the monastery built at Winchester in honor of Saint Peter, Queen Emma remained alone in the kingdom, sorrowing for the bitter death of her lord and alarmed at the absence of her sons. For one of them, namely Harthacnut, whom his father had made king of the Danes, was in his own kingdom, and two others were residing with their relative Robert, for they had been sent to the country of Normandy to be brought up. And so it came to pass that certain Englishmen, forgetting the piety of their lately deceased king, preferred to dishonor their country than to ornament it, and deserted the noble sons of the excellent Queen Emma, choosing as their king one Harald [Harold Harefoot, r. 1035–40], who is declared, owing to a false estimation of the matter, to be a son of a certain concubine of the above-mentioned King Cnut; as a matter of fact, the assertion of very many people has it that the same Harald was secretly taken from a servant who was in childbed, and put in the chamber of the concubine, who was indisposed; and this can be believed as the more truthful account. Soon after being chosen, this man, fearing for the future, summoned Archbishop Æthelnoth, a man gifted with high courage and wisdom, and commanded and prayed to be consecrated king, and that the royal scepter, which was committed to the archbishop's custody, should be given to him together with the crown, and that he should be led by the archbishop, since it was not legal that this should be done by another, to the lofty throne of the kingdom. The archbishop refused, declaring by oath that while the sons of Queen Emma lived he would approve or consecrate no other man as king: "Cnut entrusted them to my good faith; to them I owe fidelity, and with them I shall maintain faith. I lay the scepter and crown upon the holy altar, and to you I neither refuse nor give them;

but, by my apostolic authority, I forbid all bishops to remove these things, or give them to you or consecrate you. As for you, if you dare, lay hands upon what I have committed to God and his table." He, wretched man, did not know what to do or whither to turn. He used threats and it did not avail him, he promised gifts and sorrowed to gain nothing, for that apostolic man could not be dislodged by threats or diverted by gifts. At length he departed in despair, and so despised the episcopal benediction that he hated not only the benediction itself, but indeed even turned from the whole Christian religion. For when others entered church to hear mass, as is the Christian custom, he either surrounded the glades with dogs for the chase, or occupied himself with any other utterly paltry matters, wishing only to be able to avoid what he hated. When the English observed his behavior they sorrowed, but since they had chosen him to be their king, they were ashamed to reject him, and accordingly decided that he should be their king to the end.

2. But Emma, the queen of the kingdom, silently awaited the end of the matter, and for some little time was in her anxiety daily gaining God's help by prayer. But the usurper was secretly laying traps for the queen, since as yet he dared not act openly, but nobody allowed him to hurt her. Accordingly, he devised an unrighteous scheme with his companions, and proposed to kill the children of his lady, that henceforth he might be able to reign in security and live in his sins. He would, however, have effected nothing whatever in this matter if, helped by the deceit of fraudulent men, he had not devised what we are about to narrate. For having hit upon a trick, he had a letter composed as if from the queen to her sons, who were resident in Normandy, and of this I do not hesitate to insert a copy:

3. "Emma, queen in name only, imparts motherly salutation to her sons, Edward and Alfred. Since we severally lament the death of our lord, the king, most dear sons, and since daily you are deprived more and more of the kingdom, your inheritance, I wonder what plan you are adopting, since you are aware that the delay arising from your procrastination is becoming from day to day a support to the usurper of your rule. For he goes around hamlets and cities ceaselessly, and makes their chief men his friends by gifts, threats and prayers. But they would prefer one of you to rule over them, rather than that they remain in the power of him who now commands them. I entreat, therefore, that one of you come to me speedily and privately, to receive from me wholesome counsel, and to know how this matter, which I desire, must be brought to pass. Send back word what you are going to do about these matters by the present messenger, whoever he may be. Farewell, beloved ones of my heart."

4. This forgery, when it had been composed at the command of Harald the tyrant, was sent to the royal youths by means of deceitful couriers, presented to them as being from their unwitting mother, and received by them with honor, as a gift from their parent. They read its wiles in their innocence, and—alas!—too trustful of the fabrication, they unwisely replied to their parent that one of them would come to her, and determined upon a day and time and place to meet her. The messengers, accordingly, returned and told the foes of God what answer had been made to them by the most noble youths. And so they awaited the prince's arrival, and schemed what they should do to him to injure him. Now on the fixed day Alfred, the younger prince, selected companions with his brother's approval, and beginning his journey came into the country of Flanders. There he lingered a little with Marquis Baldwin, and when asked by him to lead some part of his forces with him as a precaution against the snares of the enemy, was unwilling to do so, but taking only a few men of Boulogne, boarded ship and crossed the sea. But when he came near the shore, he was soon recognized by the enemy, who came and intended to attack him, but he recognized them and ordered the ships to be pushed off from that shore. He landed, however, at another port, and attempted to go to his mother, deeming that he had entirely evaded the bane of the ambush. But when he was already near his goal, Earl Godwin met him and took him under his protection, and forthwith became his soldier by averment under oath. Diverting him from London, he led him into the town called Guildford, and lodged his soldiers there in separate billets by twenties, twelves and tens, leaving a few with the young man, whose duty was to be in attendance upon him. And he gave them food and drink in plenty, and withdrew personally to his own lodging, until he should return in the morning to wait upon his lord with due honor.

5. But after they had eaten and drunk, and being weary, had gladly ascended their couches, behold, men leagued with the most abominable tyrant Harald appeared, entered the various billets, secretly removed the arms of the innocent men, confined them with iron manacles and fetters, and kept them till the morrow to be tortured. But when it was morning, the innocent men were led out, and were iniquitously condemned without a hearing. . . .

6. Therefore, since I am dealing briefly with the sufferings of the soldiers, it remains that I should curtail the course of my narrative in telling of the martyrdom of their prince, that is to say the glorious Alfred, lest perchance if I should choose to go over all that was done to him in detail, I should multiply the grief of many people and particularly of you, Lady Queen. In this matter I beg you, lady, not to ask more than this, which I, sparing your feelings, will briefly tell. For

many things could be told if I were not sparing your sorrow. Indeed there is no greater sorrow for a mother than to see or hear of the death of a most dear son. The royal youth, then, was captured secretly in his lodging, and having been taken to the island called Ely, was first of all mocked by the most wicked soldiery. Then still more contemptible persons were selected, that the lamented youth might be condemned by them in their madness. When these men had been set up as judges they decreed that first of all both his eyes should be put out as a sign of contempt. After they prepared to carry this out, two men were placed on his arms to hold them meanwhile, one on his breast, and one on his legs, in order that the punishment might be more easily inflicted on him. Why do I linger over this sorrow? As I write my pen trembles, and I am horror-stricken at what the most blessed youth suffered. Therefore I will the sooner turn away from the misery of so great a disaster, and touch upon the conclusion of this martyrdom as far as its consummation. For he was held fast, and after his eyes had been put out he was most wickedly slain. When this murder had been performed, they left his lifeless body, which the servants of Christ, the monks, I mean, of the same Isle of Ely, took up and honorably buried. However, many miracles occur where his tomb is, as people report who even declare most repeatedly that they have seen them. And it is justly so: for he was martyred in his innocence, and therefore it is fitting that the might of the innocent should be exercised through him. So let Queen Emma rejoice in so great an intercessor, since him, who she formerly had as a son on earth, she now has as a patron in the heavens.

7. But the queen, smitten by so unheard-of a crime, considered in silent thought what it was needful that she should do. And so her mind was carried this way and that in uncertainty, and she was chary of trusting herself further to such perfidy, for she was dazed beyond consolation with sorrow for her murdered son, although she derived comfort in a much greater degree from his assured rest. And so she was, as we have said, distressed for a twofold reason, that is to say, because of misery and sadness at her son's death, and also because of uncertainty about her own life and position. But perchance at this point some one, whom ill-will toward this lady has rendered spiteful and odious, will protest to me: "Why did she refuse to die the same death, since she in no way doubted that her son, who had been slain under these conditions of treachery, enjoyed eternal rest?" To rebut this I consider that one must reply as follows: "If the persecutor of the Christian religion and faith had been present, she would not have shrunk from encountering mortal danger. On the other hand, it would have appeared wrong and abominable to all orthodox Christians if a matron of such reputation had lost her life through desire for worldly

dominion, and indeed death would not have been considered a worthy end to the fortunes of so great a lady." Keeping these and similar arguments in mind . . . she acted in hopes of saving what was left of her position, which was under the circumstances in which she was placed sufficiently sound, and at length followed a sagacious plan by the grace of the divine regard. She believed it expedient for her to seek foreign nations, and she brought this decision to consummation with shrewd judgment. . . . And so she assembled as many nobles who were faithful to herself as she could, in view of the circumstances and the time. When these were present, she told them her inmost thoughts. When they had approved the plan put in train by their lady, their ships' supplies [were] prepared for exile. And so, having enjoyed favorable winds, they crossed the sea and touched at a certain port not far from the town of Bruges. . . . Here she was, as she deserved, honorably received by Baldwin, the marquis of that same province. . . .

8. And so, being placed in such great security, she sent messengers to her son Edward to ask that he should come to her without delay. He obeyed them, mounted his horse and came to his mother. But when they had the opportunity for discussion, the son declared that he pitied his mother's misfortunes, but that he was able in no way to help, since the English nobles had sworn no oath to him, a circumstance indicating that help should be sought from his brother. Thereupon Edward returned to Normandy, and the queen still hesitated in her mind as to what she ought to do. After her son's departure, she dispatched messengers to her son Harthacnut, who then held sway over the Danes, and through them revealed to him her unheard-of sorrow, and begged him to hasten to come to her as soon as possible. The horror of so great a crime made his ears tremble, and first of all as he deliberated his spirits sank stunned by intolerable sorrow. For he burned in his heart to go and avenge his brother's injuries, and even more so to obey his mother's message.

9. Accordingly, providing for either eventuality, he got ready the greatest forces he could of ships and soldiers, and assembled the greater number of them in a certain inlet of the sea, to come to his support if on his journey the opportunity to give battle or the need for defense should arise. For the rest, he set out accompanied by not more than ten ships to go to his mother, who was laboring under the very great distress of sorrow. When, therefore, they were absorbed in their prosperous voyage, and were not only eagerly plowing the salt foam with brazen prows, but also raising their topsails to the favorable winds, whereas the surface of the sea is never dependable, but is always found to be unreliable and faithless, suddenly a murky tempest of winds and clouds was rolled up from behind, and the surface of the

sea was agitated by overtaking south winds. And so the anchors were dropped from the prows, and caught in the sands of the bottom, which is what is wont to be done in such desperate straits. This incident, although it was distressing to them at the time, is not believed to have taken place without the consent of God, who disposes all things, as the issue of the affair afterward proved, when the limbs of all yielded to quiet rest and sleep. For on the next night, when Harthacnut was at rest in his bed, by divine providence a vision appeared, which comforted and consoled him and bade him be of good cheer. Furthermore, it exhorted him not to desist from his undertaking, for after a space of a few days the unjust usurper of his kingdom, Harald, would perish, and the kingdom conquered by his father's strength would return safely by most rightful succession to himself, the rightful heir.

10. The dreamer accordingly, when he awoke, was enlightened by the signs described above, and returned thanks to Almighty God for such great consolation, and had at the same time not the slightest doubt about the coming events which the vision above described had foretold. Thereupon, the wrath of the sea having subsided, and the storm having dropped, he spread his bellying sails to the favorable winds; and thus, having enjoyed a successful voyage, he landed at Bruges. Here, having moored his ships with anchors and rods, and having commissioned sailors to look after them, he went directly with chosen companions to the lodging of his mother. . . . And soon afterward, while the son was lingering with his mother expecting the events promised by the vision above described, messengers arrived bearing glad tidings, and announced, to wit, that Harald was dead, reporting furthermore that the English nobles did not wish to oppose him, but to rejoice together with him in jubilation of every kind; therefore they begged him not to scorn to return to the kingdom which was his by hereditary right, but to take counsel for both his own position and their safety with regard to the common good.

11. Encouraged by these things, Harthacnut and his mother decided to return to the shores of the ancestral realm. When word of this matter reached the ears of the people, soon you would have seen pain and grief to be universal. For the rich mourned her departure, with whom they had ever enjoyed pleasant conversation; the poor mourned her departure, by whose continual generosity they were relieved from the burden of want; the widows mourned with the orphans, whom she had freely enriched when they were taken from the holy baptismal font. . . .

13. Under these circumstances the English nobles, lacking confidence in the legation previously sent, met them before they crossed the sea, deeming that the best course was for them to make

amends to the king and queen, and to place themselves devotedly under their dominion. When Harthacnut and his mother had been apprised by these men, and when he had at length reached a port on the other side of the sea, he was most gloriously received by all the inhabitants of that country, and thus by the grace of the divine favor the realm which was properly his was restored. After the events described, he arranged all his affairs in the calm of peace, and being gripped by brotherly love, sent messengers to Edward and asked him to come and hold the kingdom together with himself.

14. Obeying his brother's command, he was conveyed to England, and the mother and both sons, having no disagreement between them, enjoy the ready amenities of the kingdom. Here there is loyalty among sharers of rule, here the bond of motherly and brotherly love is indestructible. All these things were granted them by Him, who makes dwellers in a house be of one mind, Jesus Christ, the Lord of all, who, abiding in the Trinity, holds a kingdom which flourishes unfading. Amen.

Questions: Given the author's desire to produce a flattering picture of Emma and her actions, what alternative interpretations could be placed on these events? Does the text include any hints that some contemporaries viewed her in a less positive light? What was expected of a woman in Emma's position, and how did such a woman win approval? How was political power gained and wielded in Anglo-Saxon England?

18. *The Life of King Edward Who Rests at Westminster*

Emma's son Edward soon succeeded his younger half-brother and became the king known as Edward "the Confessor" (r. 1042–66) for his conspicuous piety. After his death his wife Edith, daughter of Godwin, the powerful earl of Wessex, commissioned the biography of Edward which is excerpted here. Like The Praise of Queen Emma*, it presents a glowing picture of its patroness, but here the focus is on her husband. Among its themes are the king's religious devotion and ongoing power struggles involving the queen's brothers.*

Source: trans. F. Barlow, *The Life of King Edward Who Rests at Westminster, Attributed to a Monk of Saint-Bertin*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford Medieval Texts, 1992), pp. 61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, 83, 91, 93, 95, 97, 117, 119, 121, 123, 125, 127.

6. And so, with the kingdom made safe on all sides by these nobles, the most kindly King Edward passed his life in security and peace, and spent much of his time in the glades and woods in the pleasures of hunting. After divine service, which he gladly and devoutly attended every day, he took much pleasure in hawks and birds of that kind which were brought before him, and was really delighted by the baying and scrambling of the hounds. In these and such like activities he sometimes spent the day, and it was in these alone that he seemed naturally inclined to snatch some worldly pleasure. Otherwise this man, of his free will devoted to God, lived in the squalor of the world like an angel and "at the accepted time" (2 Corinthians 6:2) he zealously showed how assiduous he was in practicing the Christian religion. What tongue or what page could unfold, in accordance with reality and true accounting, how kindly he received religious abbots and monks, above all foreign, whom he knew to be very devout and strict in their service to God, how humbly he joined in their conversation, and, at their departure, with what generosity he lavished himself on them? This he used to do throughout his reign; and since the news spread widely that such was his pleasure, he kept hospitality of this kind not only frequently but all the time. Moreover, like a good father, he exhibited such men as models to the abbots and monks of his own kingdom, for monastic discipline had come to these more recently, and was on that account less strict. He used to stand with lamb-like meekness and tranquil mind at the holy offices of the divine mysteries and masses, a worshiper of Christ manifest to all the faithful; and at these times, unless he was addressed, he rarely spoke to anyone. Moreover, it was quietly, and only for the occasion—in any case, it should be distinctly said, with no mental pleasure—that he displayed the pomp of royal finery in which the queen obligingly arrayed him. And he would not have cared at all if it had been provided at far less cost. He was, however, grateful for the queen's solicitude in these matters, and with a certain kindness of feeling used to remark on her zeal most appreciatively to his intimates. He stooped with great mercy to the poor and infirm, and fully maintained many of these not only daily in his royal court but also at many places in his kingdom. Finally, his royal consort did not restrain him in those good works in which he prepared to lead the way, but rather urged speedier progress, and often enough seemed even to lead the way herself. For while he would give now and then, she was prodigal, but aimed her bounty to such good purpose as to consider the highest honor of the king as well. Although by custom and law a royal throne was always prepared for her at the king's side, she preferred, except in church and at the royal table, to sit at his feet, unless by chance he should reach out his hand to her, or with a gesture of the hand invite or command

her to sit next to him. I say she was a woman to be placed before all noble matrons or persons of royal and imperial rank as a model of virtue and integrity for maintaining both the practices of the Christian religion and worldly dignity. Although in the earthly kingdom great prosperity smiled upon them, occasionally, however, in the plots of certain insurgents adversity struck with force. But these were not such as could cripple a realm ruled by so great a king; indeed, the kingdom, employing the brother earls mentioned before as its protectors, most quickly either assuaged it or with military valor stamped it out.

There rose, for example, almost at the same time, on this side Gruffydd, king of the West Britons [the Welsh], and on the other the king of the Scots with an outlandish name [Macbeth]. The former, however, with Earl Harold [Edith's brother and Edward's brother-in-law] directing the English army, was often defeated, and in the end was killed. But we deliberately reserve this story for a more faithful treatment in the future. It is rather protracted and complicated, and can be explained better in a longer report. Besides, the man whom we, impressed by the burden of the labor he undertook and his unusual industry, have undertaken to describe in this book (but not without uneasiness of mind), cannot be portrayed with slight effort or in a short essay to the satisfaction of those readers who want to know in more detail about things done with great love and labor.

The Scottish king, too, was first defeated with the destruction of almost all his men by Earl Siward [of Northumbria] and forced to take to shameful flight. Then, when Earl Tostig [another of Edith's brothers] ruled the earldom, the Scots, since they had not yet tested him and consequently held him more cheaply, harassed him often with raids rather than war. But this irresolute and fickle race of men, better in woods than on the plain, and trusting more to flight than to manly boldness in battle, Tostig, sparing his own men, wore down as much by cunning schemes as by martial courage and military campaigns. And as a result they and their king preferred to serve him and King Edward rather than continue fighting, and, moreover, to confirm the peace by giving hostages.

. . . But now let us turn again to King Edward and his royal consort Edith—the illustrious mistress whom we chiefly serve in this present account—and display with all the power and understanding we have, and with the aid of God's grace and favor, with what zeal they showed their devout faith in the Church of Christ.

Outside the walls of London, upon the River Thames, stood a monastery [Westminster Abbey] dedicated to Saint Peter, but insignificant in buildings and numbers, for under the abbot only a small community of monks served Christ. Moreover, the endowments from the faithful were slender, and provided no more than their daily

bread. The king, therefore, being devoted to God, gave his attention to that place, for it both lay hard by the famous and rich town and also was a delightful spot, surrounded with fertile lands and green fields and near the main channel of the river, which bore abundant merchandise of wares of every kind for sale from the whole world to the town on its banks. And, especially because of his love of [Peter,] the prince of the apostles, whom he worshiped with uncommon and special love, he decided to have his burial place there. Accordingly he ordered that out of the tithes of all his revenues should be started the building of a noble edifice, worthy of the prince of the apostles; so that, after the transient journey of this life, God would look kindly upon him, both for the sake of his goodness and because of the gift of lands and ornaments with which he intended to ennoble the place. And so at the king's command the building, nobly begun, was made ready, and there was no weighing of the cost, past or future, as long as it proved worthy of, and acceptable to, God and Saint Peter. The house of the principal altar, raised up with most lofty vaulting, is surrounded by dressed stone, evenly jointed. Moreover, the circumference of that temple is enclosed on both sides by a double arch of stones, with the structure of the work strongly consolidated from different directions. Next is the crossing of the church, which is to hold in its midst the choir of God's choristers, and, with its twin abutments, from either side support the high apex of the central tower. It rises simply at first with a low and sturdy vault, swells with many a stair spiraling up in artistic profusion, but then with a plain wall climbs to the wooden roof which is carefully covered with lead. And indeed, methodically arranged above and below, are chapels to be consecrated through their altars to the memory of apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins. Moreover, the whole complex of this enormous building is set at a sufficient distance from the east end of the old church to allow not only the brethren dwelling there to continue with their service of Christ but also some part of the nave, which is to lie in between, to advance a good way.

But so that the king should not labor alone, the queen, his worthy spouse, was drawn to emulate that project of his, so pleasing to God. She instantly imitated the king's love with her own, and demonstrated her own heart's devotion to the holy Church in the place of her upbringing. For at Wilton at that time, although there was a convent of the handmaidens of Christ, a choir, too, of the greatest antiquity, and her namesake saint, adequately housed, was worshiped there—Saint Edith, from whose stock King Edward himself was descended—the church was still of wood. And she judged no place more deserving of her devoted labor and zeal than that which, she recalled, had taken pains with her education, and where above all she had learned those

virtues which deservedly made her seem suitable to become queen of the English. Also, nowhere did she believe alms would be better bestowed than where the weaker sex, less skilled in building, more deeply felt the pinch of poverty, and was less able by its own efforts to drive it away. Benignly she planned this herself, as one abounding in the bowels of mercy through the Holy Spirit, and began here royally to build a monastery in stone. Impetuously she urged the workmen to make haste. Thus here the king and there the queen strove in a contest which was pleasing to God and not disagreeable to them. . . .

7. The consecration of this church in honor of Saint Benedict, the father and instructor of monks, performed in the year 1065, was followed, to the distress of the whole country, by a disturbance in the kingdom. At this time the earl of the Northern Angles, whom we have often mentioned, Tostig, was at the king's court; and he stayed with him for some time, detained by his love of the king and while he dealt with some palace business which had been put on him. Meanwhile, a party of nobles, whom he had repressed with the heavy yoke of his rule because of their misdeeds, conspired among themselves against him. . . . King Edward, a man worthy of God, thinking to appease the untamed mob with his usual wisdom, sent them through messengers goodly orders, that is to say, to desist from the madness they had begun and receive right and justice for every injury which they could prove against him. But those in revolt against their God and king rejected the conciliatory message, and replied to the king that either he should straightway dismiss that earl of his from his person and the whole kingdom, or he himself would be treated as an enemy and have all them as enemies. And when the most gracious king had a second and third time through messengers and by every kind of effort of his counselors tried to turn them from their mad purpose, and failed, he moved from the forests, in which he was as usual staying for the sake of regular hunting, to Britford, a royal manor near the royal town of Wilton. And when he had summoned the magnates from all over the kingdom, he took counsel there on what was to be done in this business. Not a few charged that glorious earl with being too cruel; and he was accused of punishing disturbers more for desire of their property which would be confiscated than for love of justice. It was also said, if it be worthy of credence, that they had undertaken this madness against their earl at the artful persuasion of his brother, Earl Harold (which heaven forbid!). But I dare not and would not believe that such a prince was guilty of this detestable wickedness against his brother. Earl Tostig himself, however, publicly testifying before the king and his assembled courtiers, charged him with this; but Harold, rather too generous with oaths (alas!), cleared this charge too with oaths.

When the rebels, after many negotiations with the king through messengers, would not agree, but rather raged more furiously in their mad purpose, Edward stirred up the whole population of the rest of England by a royal edict and decided to crush their impudent contumacy by force. But because changeable weather was already setting in from hard winter, and it was not easy to raise a sufficient number of troops for a counter offensive, and because in that race horror was felt at what seemed civil war, some strove to calm the raging spirit of the king and urged that the attack should not be mounted. And after they had struggled for a long time, they did not change the king's desire to march, but wrongfully deserted him against his will. Sorrowing at this, he fell ill, and from that day until the day of his death he bore a sickness of the mind. He protested to God with deep sorrow, and complained to Him that he was deprived of the due obedience of his men in repressing the presumption of the unrighteous; and he called down God's vengeance upon them.

The queen was, on the one hand, confounded by the quarrel of her brothers and, on the other, bereft of all support by the powerlessness of her husband, the king. And when her counsels came to naught—and by God's grace she shone above all in counsel if she were heard—she plainly showed her foreboding of future evils by her tears. And when she wept inconsolably, the whole palace went into mourning. For when misfortunes had attacked them in the past, she had always stood as a defense, and had both repelled all the hostile forces with her powerful counsels and also cheered the king and his retinue. Now, however, when, owing to sin, things had turned against them, all men deduced future disasters from the signs of the present. But the king, the beloved of God, when he could not save his earl, graciously heaped on him many gifts and then let him depart, profoundly distressed at the powerlessness that had come upon him. And a short time after, Tostig took leave of his sorrowing mother and some of his friends, and with his wife and infant children, and a goodly company of his thegns crossed the Channel and came to that old friend of the English people, Count Baldwin [of Flanders]. . . .

Book 2

1. And so, as we get so far as to record the death of this glorious king, let us first briefly say something about his earlier life. King Edward of happy memory was chosen by God before the day of his birth, and consequently was consecrated to the kingdom less by men than, as we have said before, by heaven. He preserved with holy chastity the dignity of his consecration, and lived his whole life dedicated to God in true innocence. God approved this as an acceptable burnt offering,

and with profound love made him dear to men and worshipful among the citizens of heaven. For, as we have learnt from the joint testimony of good and fitting men, God glorified him in this life of corruption by these signs.

2. A certain young woman, already provided with a husband, but gladdened with no fruit of the marriage, had an infection of the throat and of those parts under the jaw which, from their likeness to an acorn, are called glands. These had so disfigured her face with an evil smelling disease that she could scarcely speak to anyone without great embarrassment. She was advised in a dream that if she were washed in water by King Edward she would be cured of this most dreadful infection. She then, with the certainty of faith, revealed the dream's instructions. And when the king heard of it, he did not disdain to help the weaker sex, for he had the sweetest nature, and was always charming to all suitors. A dish of water was brought; the king dipped in his hand; and with the tips of his fingers he anointed the face of the young woman and the places infected by the disease. He repeated this action several times, now and then making the sign of the cross. And believe in wonder one about to relate wonders! Those diseased parts that had been treated by the smearing of the king softened and separated from the skin; and, with the pressure of the hand, worms together with pus and blood came out of various holes. Again the good king kneaded with his holy hand and drew out the pus. Nor did he shrink from enduring the stench of the sick woman until with his healing hand he had brought out all that noxious disease. Then he ordered her to be fed daily at the royal expense until she should be fully restored to health. And hardly had she been at court a week, when, all foulness washed away, the grace of God molded her with beauty. And she, who formerly through this or some other sickness had been barren, in that year became pregnant by the same husband, and lived henceforth happily enough with all around her. Although this seems new and strange to us, the Franks aver that Edward had done this often as a youth when he was in Neustria, now known as Normandy. . . .

11. . . . When King Edward, replete with faith, perceived that the power of the disease was forcing him to his end, with the commendation and prayers of the most important of God's faithful he resigned himself to the funeral rites. For, indeed, being now freed by the protection of the spirit of God from the affairs of a secular ruler, he could through heavenly contemplation enjoy more easily a vision of the future. While his frail body was being sustained by the hands of the devout awaiting his death, becoming drowsy because of his body's heaviness, he was instructed infallibly about those things which we for our sins bear at the present time. While he slept those in attendance

felt in his sleeping body the travail of his unquiet soul, and, woken by them in their terror, he spoke these words. (Up till then, for the last two days or more, weakness had so tired him that when he spoke scarcely anything he said had been intelligible.) “O eternal God,” he said, “if I have learnt those things which have now been revealed to me from you, grant also the strength to tell them. But if it was only an illusion, let my former sickness burden me according to your will.” And then, as they who were there testify, he used such resources of eloquence that even the healthiest man would have no need of more.

“Just now,” he said, “two monks stood before me, whom I had once known very well when I was a young man in Normandy, men of great sanctity, and for many years now relieved of earthly cares. And they addressed me with a message from God. ‘Since,’ they said, ‘those who have climbed to the highest offices in the kingdom of England, the earls, bishops, and abbots, and all those in holy orders, are not what they seem to be, but, on the contrary, are servants of the devil, within a year and a day after the day of your death God will deliver all this kingdom, cursed by him, into the hands of the enemy, and devils shall come through all this land with fire and sword and the havoc of war.’ Then I said to them, ‘I will show God’s designs to the people, and the forgiveness of God shall have mercy upon the penitents. For he had mercy on the people of Nineveh, when they repented on hearing of the divine indignation.’ But they said, ‘These will not repent, nor will the forgiveness of God come to pass for them.’ ‘And what,’ I asked, ‘shall happen? And when can a remission of this great indignation be hoped for?’ ‘At that time,’ they answered, ‘when a green tree, if cut down in the middle of its trunk, and the part cut off carried the space of three furlongs from the stock, shall be joined again to its trunk, by itself and without the hand of man or any sort of stake, and begin once more to put forth leaves and bear fruit from the old love of its uniting sap, then first can a remission of these great ills be hoped for.’”

When those who were present had heard these words—that is to say, the queen, who was sitting on the floor warming his feet in her lap, her full brother, Earl Harold, and Rodbert, the steward of the royal palace and a kinsman of the king, also Archbishop Stigand and a few more whom the blessed king when roused from sleep had ordered to be summoned—they were all sore afraid as men who had heard a speech containing many calamities and a denial of the hope of pity. And while all were stupefied and silent from the effect of terror, the archbishop himself, who ought to have been the first either to be afraid or to give a word of advice, with folly at heart whispered in the ear of the earl that the king was broken with age and disease and knew not what he said. But the queen, and those who had been wont

to know and fear God in their hearts, all pondered deeply the words they had heard, and understood them quite otherwise, and correctly. For these knew that the Christian religion was chiefly dishonored by men in holy orders, and that both the pope of Rome by means of legates and letters and the king and queen by frequent admonition had often proclaimed this. But there were some men, irreparably attracted to the devil by riches and worldly glory, who had so neglected the conduct of their lives that they did not fear to fall into the wrath of God which then was already threatening them. For though they should take vengeance for a time on the flocks of harmless sheep, it is not to be hidden from the pastors and those of us who have sinned that, if we are not punished in this world and in purgatory, it is greatly to be feared that vengeance for our sins will be reserved for us in eternity. . . .

But leaving this sorrow for a while, let us return to the other, and describe how this gem of God stripped off the corruption of his earthly body and obtained a place of eternal splendor in the diadem of the heavenly king. When he was sick unto death and his men stood and wept bitterly, he said, “Do not weep, but intercede with God for my soul, and give me leave to go to him. For he will not pardon me so that I shall not die who would not pardon himself so that he should not die.” Then he addressed his last words to the queen, who was sitting at his feet, in this way: “May God be gracious to this my wife for the zealous solicitude of her service. For certainly she has served me devotedly, and has always stood close by my side like a beloved daughter. And so from the forgiving God may she obtain the reward of eternal happiness.” And stretching forth his hand to his governor, her brother Harold, he said, “I commend this woman and all the kingdom to your protection. Serve and honor her with faithful obedience as your lady and sister, which she is, and do not despoil her, as long as she lives, of any due honor received from me. Likewise, I also commend those men who have left their native land for love of me, and have up till now served me faithfully. Take from them an oath of fealty, if they should so wish, and protect and retain them, or send them with your safe conduct safely across the Channel to their own homes with all that they have acquired in my service. Let the grave for my burial be prepared in the minster [Westminster] in the place which shall be assigned to you. I ask that you do not conceal my death, but announce it promptly in all parts, so that all the faithful can beseech the mercy of almighty God on me, a sinner.” Now and then he also comforted the queen, who did not cease lamenting, to ease her natural grief. “Fear not,” he said, “I shall not die now, but by God’s mercy regain my strength.” Nor did he mislead the attentive, least of all himself, by these words, for he has not died, but has passed

“from death to life” (1 John 3:14) to live with Christ.

And so, coming with these and like words to his last hour, he took the viaticum from the table of heavenly life and gave up his spirit to God the creator on the fourth of January, foreshowing a funereal and mournful head, if we may use the expression, of the new year, on account of which we should be obliged to observe the whole body of months become weak with tribulation and manifold slaughter. Then could be seen in the dead body the glory of a soul departing to God. For the flesh of his face blushed like a rose, his beard gleamed like a lily, his hands, laid out straight, whitened, and were a sign that his whole body was given not to death but to auspicious sleep. And so the funeral rites were arranged at the royal cost and with royal honor, as was proper, and amid the boundless sorrow of all men. They bore his holy remains from his palace home into the house of God, and offered up prayers and sighs and psalms all that day and the following night. Meanwhile, when the day of the funeral ceremony dawned, they blessed the office of the interment they were to conduct with the singing of masses and the relief of the poor. And so, before the altar of Saint Peter the Apostle, the king’s body, washed by his country’s tears, is laid up in the sight of God. They also caused the whole of the thirty days following to be observed with the celebration of masses and the chanting of psalms, and expended many pounds of gold for the redemption of his soul in the alleviation of different classes of the poor. Having revealed him as a saint while still living in the world, as we wrote before, at his tomb likewise merciful God reveals by these signs that he lives with him as a saint in heaven. For at the tomb through him the blind receive their sight, the lame are made to walk, the sick are healed, the sorrowing are refreshed by the comfort of God, and for the faith of those who call upon him, God, the king of kings, works the tokens of his goodness.

Questions: For what does the author admire Edward? What is the relation between the king and his subjects? With what kinds of problems does a king have to cope? How does this portrayal compare with the picture of Emma in the previous work? Edward and Edith had no children; how does the author nevertheless portray their marriage as successful? What is the meaning of the deathbed scene?

Chapter Two

The Norman Era, 1066–1154

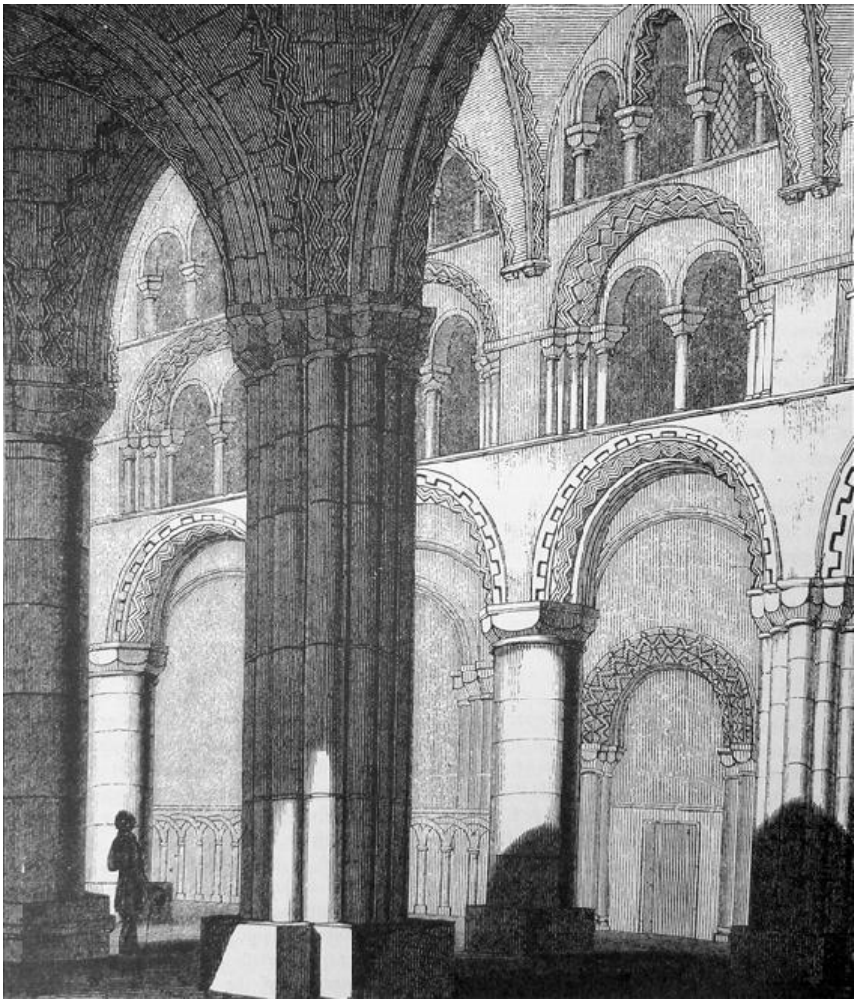

Fig. 7. The Nave of Durham Cathedral. Begun in the late eleventh century, the Romanesque cathedral at Durham remains a dramatic statement of Norman power.

19. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle on the Norman Conquest

From the late ninth century into the twelfth, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle provides a contemporary record of events in England, updated annually by monks whose identities are unknown to us. The excerpt below tells the story, some of it in alliterative verse (i.e., verse in which common sounds are frequently repeated at the beginnings of words), of the momentous Norman Conquest, from the perspective of the conquered. This version was written at Peterborough Abbey in eastern England. The "hides" referred to in the entry for 1085 are measures of land, but the size of a hide could vary from roughly 60 to 120 acres.

Source: trans. J. Ingram, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1912), pp. 144–54, 162–68; revised.

[A.D. 1065] . . . About midwinter [25 December] King Edward came to Westminster, and had the minster [church] there consecrated, which he had himself built to the honor of God, and Saint Peter, and all God's saints. This church-hallowing was on Childermas day [28 December]. He died on the eve of twelfth-day [5 January]; and he was buried on twelfth-day in the same minster; as it is hereafter said.

Here Edward king,
of Angles lord,
sent his steadfast
soul to Christ.
In the kingdom of God
a holy spirit!
He in the world here
abode awhile,
in the kingly throng
of council sage.
Four and twenty
winters wielding
the scepter freely,
wealth he dispensed.
In the tide of health,
the youthful monarch,
offspring of Æthelred!
ruled well his subjects;
the Welsh and the Scots,
and the Britons also,

Angles and Saxons—
relations of old.

So apprehend
the first in rank,
that to Edward all
—the noble king—
were firmly held
high-seated men.
Blithe-minded, aye,
was the harmless king;
though he long ere,
of land bereft,
abode in exile
wide on the earth;
when Cnut overcame
the kin of Ethelred,
and the Danes wielded
the dear kingdom
of Engle-land.
Eight and twenty
winters' rounds
they wealth dispensed.
Then came forth
free in his chambers,
in royal array,
good, pure, and mild,
Edward the noble;
by his country defended—
by land and people.
Until suddenly came
the bitter Death
and this king so dear
snatched from the earth.
Angels carried
his soul sincere
into the light of heaven.
But the prudent king
had settled the realm
on high-born men—
on Harold himself,
the noble earl;

who in every season
faithfully heard
and obeyed his lord,
in word and deed;

nor gave to any
what might be wanted
by the nation's king.

This year also was Earl Harold consecrated as king; but he enjoyed little peace while he ruled the kingdom.

A.D. 1066. This year King Harold came from York to Westminster, on the Easter after the midwinter when the king (Edward) died. Easter was then on the sixteenth day before the calends of May [16 April]. Then over all England such a sign was seen as no man ever saw before. Some men said that it was the comet-star, which others call the long-haired star. It appeared first on the eve called *Litania major*, that is, on the eighth before the calends of May [25 April]; and so it shone all the week. Soon after this Earl Tostig came in from beyond the sea into the Isle of Wight, with as large a fleet as he could get; and he was there supplied with money and provisions. From there he proceeded, and committed outrages everywhere by the seacoast where he could land, until he came to Sandwich. When King Harold, who was in London, was told that his brother Tostig had come to Sandwich, he gathered so large a force, both naval and military, as no king before collected in this land; for it was credibly reported that Earl William from Normandy, King Edward's cousin, would come here and gain this land; just as afterward happened. When Tostig understood that King Harold was on the way to Sandwich, he departed from there, and took some of the boatmen with him, . . . and went north into the Humber with sixty ships; from there he plundered in Lindsey, and there slew many good men. When the Earls Edwin and Morcar understood that, they came here, and drove him from the land. And the boatmen forsook him. Then he went to Scotland with twelve smacks [single-masted boats]; and the king of the Scots entertained him, and aided him with provisions; and he lived there all the summer. There Harald, king of Norway, met him with three hundred ships. And Tostig submitted to Harald, and became his man.

Then came King Harold [of England] to Sandwich, where he awaited his fleet; for it was long before it could be collected: but when it was assembled, he went into the Isle of Wight, and there lay all the summer and the autumn. There was also a land force everywhere by the sea, though it was worth nothing in the end. It was now the nativity of Saint Mary [8 September], when the provisioning of the men began; and no man could keep them there any longer. They therefore had leave to go home: and the king rode up, and the ships were driven to London; but many perished before they came there. When the ships had come home, then came Harald, king of Norway, north into the Tyne, unexpectedly, with a very great sea-force—no

small one; with perhaps three hundred ships or more; and Earl Tostig came to him with all those that he had got; just as they had before said: and they both then went up with all the fleet along the River Ouse toward York.

When King Harold was told in the south, after he had come from the ships, that Harald, King of Norway, and Earl Tostig had come up near York, then he went northward by day and night, as soon as he could collect his army. But, before King Harold could get there, the Earls Edwin [of Mercia] and Morcar [of Northumbria] had gathered from their earldoms as great a force as they could get, and fought the enemy. They made a great slaughter, too; but there was a good number of the English people slain, and drowned, and put to flight, and the [invading] Northmen had possession of the field of battle. It was then told Harold, king of the English, that this had thus happened. And this fight was on the eve of Saint Matthew the apostle, which was Wednesday [20 September]. Then after the fight Harald, king of Norway, and Earl Tostig went into York with as many followers as they thought fit; and having procured hostages and provisions from the city, they proceeded to their ships, and proclaimed full friendship, on condition that all would go southward with them, and gain this land. In the midst of this came Harold, king of the English, with all his army, on the Sunday, to Tadcaster; where he collected his fleet. From there he proceeded on Monday throughout York. But Harald, king of Norway, and Earl Tostig, with their forces, had gone from their ships beyond York to Stamford Bridge, because it was given them to understand that hostages would be brought to them there from all over the shire. There Harold, king of the English, came unexpectedly against them beyond the bridge; and they clashed together there, and continued long in the day fighting very severely. There were slain Harald, king of Norway, and Earl Tostig, and a multitude of people with them, both of Norwegians and English; and the Norwegians that were left fled from the English, who slew them hotly behind; until some reached their ships, some were drowned, some burned to death, and thus variously destroyed, so that there were few left, and the English gained possession of the field. But there was one of the Norwegians who withstood the English, so that they could not pass over the bridge, nor complete the victory. An Englishman aimed at him with a javelin, but it achieved nothing. Then came another under the bridge, who pierced him terribly under the coat of mail. And Harold, king of the English, then came over the bridge, followed by his army; and there they made a great slaughter, both of the Norwegians and of the Flemings. But Harold let the king's son, Edmund, go home to Norway with all the ships. He also spared Olaf, the Norwegian king's son, and their bishop, and the earl of the

Orkneys, and all those that were left in the ships, who then went up to our king and took oaths that they would ever maintain faith and friendship with this land. Whereupon the king let them go home with twenty-four ships. These two general battles were fought within five nights.

Meantime Earl William came up from Normandy into Pevensey on the eve of Saint Michael's mass [28 September], and soon after his landing was complete, [he and his Normans] constructed a castle at the port of Hastings. This news was then told to King Harold; and he gathered a large force and came to meet him at the estuary of Appledore. William, however, came against him by surprise, before King Harold's army was collected; but the king, nevertheless, fought very hard against him with the men that would support him, and there was a great slaughter on either side. There were slain King Harold, and Leofwin his brother, and Earl Girth his brother, with many good men: and the Frenchmen gained the field of battle, as God granted them for the sins of the nation. Archbishop Aldred and the corporation of London then wanted to have the child Edgar as king, as he was quite familiar to them; and Edwin and Morcar promised them that they would fight with them. But the more quickly things were done, the worse they were done; and so in the end it turned out. This battle was fought on the day of Pope Calixtus [14 October], and Earl William returned to Hastings and waited there to know whether the [English] people would submit to him. But when he found that they would not come to him, he went up with all his force that was left and that came to him from over sea since the battle, and ravaged all the country that he overran, until he came to Berkhampstead, where Archbishop Aldred came to meet him, with the child Edgar, and Earls Edwin and Morcar, and all the best men from London, who submitted then because they had no choice, although the most harm had already been done. It was very ill-advised that they did not so before, seeing that God would not improve things for our sins. And the English leaders gave William hostages and took oaths: and William promised them that he would be a faithful lord to them; though in the midst of this the Normans plundered wherever they went.

Then on midwinter's day [25 December] Archbishop Aldred consecrated William as king at Westminster, and gave him possession [of the kingdom] with the books of Christ, and also had him swear, before he would set the crown on his head, that he would govern this nation as well as any before him best did, if the English would be faithful to him. Nevertheless William laid very heavy tribute on men, and in Lent he went over sea to Normandy, taking with him Archbishop Stigand, and Abbot Aylnoth of Glastonbury, and the child Edgar, and the Earls Edwin, Morcar, and Waltheof, and many other

good men of England. Bishop Odo and Earl William lived here afterward, and built castles widely through this country, and harassed the miserable people, and ever since then evil has increased very much. May the end be good, when God wills! . . .

A.D. 1067. This year the king came back again to England on Saint Nicholas's day [6 December]; and on the same day the church of Christ at Canterbury was burned. Bishop Wulfwy also died, and is buried at his see in Dorchester. The child Edric and the Welsh were unsettled this year, and fought with the castlemen at Hereford, and did them much harm. The king this year imposed a heavy geld [tax] on the wretched people, but, notwithstanding, let his men always plunder all the country that they went over, and then he marched to Devonshire, and besieged the city of Exeter for eighteen days. Many of his army were slain there, but he had promised them well, and performed ill, and the citizens surrendered the city because the thegns [English nobles] had betrayed them. . . . This year Githa, Harold's mother, and the wives of many good men with her, went out to the Flat-Holm, and stayed there some time, and so departed from there over the sea to Saint-Omer. This Easter the king came to Winchester. . . . Soon after this [King William's wife] the Lady Matilda came here to this land; and Archbishop Aldred consecrated her as queen at Westminster on Whit Sunday [27 May].

Then the king was told that the people in the north had gathered themselves together and would stand against him if he came. Whereupon he went to Nottingham, and built there a castle, and so advanced to York, and there built two castles, and did the same at Lincoln, and everywhere in that region. Then Earl Gospatric and the best [English] men went into Scotland. Amidst this one of Harold's sons came from Ireland with a naval force into the mouth of the River Avon unexpectedly, and soon plundered over all that region; from there they went to Bristol, and would have stormed the town, but the people bravely withstood them. When they could gain nothing from the town, they went to their ships with the booty which they had acquired by plunder; and then they advanced upon Somersetshire, and landed there; Ednoth, [the king's] master of the horse, fought with them, but he was slain there, as were many good men on either side, and those that survived departed.

A.D. 1068. This year King William gave Earl Robert the earldom over Northumberland; but the local English attacked him in the town of Durham, and slew him, and nine hundred men with him. Soon afterward Edgar Etheling came with all the Northumbrians to York; and the townsmen made a treaty with him. But King William came from the south by surprise against them with a large army, and put

them to flight, and slew on the spot those who could not escape, which were many hundred men, and plundered the town. He desecrated Saint Peter's minster, and he also despoiled and trampled upon all other places; and the etheling [prince] went back again to Scotland. After this Harold's sons came from Ireland, about midsummer [24 June], with sixty-four ships into the mouth of the River Taft, where they stealthily landed. Earl Breon came suddenly against them with a large army, and fought with them, and slew there all the best men that were in the fleet; and the others, being small forces, escaped to the ships, and Harold's sons went back to Ireland again.

A.D. 1069. This year Aldred, archbishop of York died; and he is buried there, at his see. He died on the day of Protus and Hyacinthus [11 September], having held the see with much dignity ten years minus only fifteen weeks. Soon after this three of the sons of King Swein came from Denmark with two hundred and forty ships, together with Earl Esborn and Earl Thurkill, into the River Humber; where they were met by the child Edgar, and Earl Waltheof, and Merle-Sweyne, and Earl Gospatric with the Northumbrians, and all the local English; riding and marching in good spirits with an immense army: and so they all unanimously advanced to York, where they stormed and demolished the castle, and won innumerable treasures. They slew there many hundreds of Frenchmen [the Normans], and led many with them to the ships, but, before the shipmen came there, the Frenchmen had burned the city and entirely plundered the holy minster of Saint Peter and destroyed it with fire. When the king heard this, then he went northward with all the forces that he could collect, despoiling and laying waste the shire everywhere, while the [Danish] fleet lay all the winter in the River Humber, where the king could not come at them. The king was in York on Christmas Day, and so all the winter on land, and came to Winchester at Easter. Bishop Egelric, who was at Peterborough, was betrayed this year, and was led to Westminster; and his brother Egelwine was outlawed. This year also Brand, abbot of Peterborough, died on the fifth before the calends of December [27 November].

A.D. 1070. This year Lanfranc, who was abbot of Caen, came to England; and after a few days he became archbishop of Canterbury. He was invested [officially made archbishop] on the fourth before the calends of September [29 August] in his own see by eight bishops, his suffragans [subordinate bishops]. The other bishops who were not there declared by messenger and by letter why they could not be there. The same year Thomas, who was chosen archbishop of York, came to Canterbury, to be invested there after the ancient custom. But when Lanfranc asked for confirmation of Thomas's obedience with an

oath, Thomas refused, and said that he did not owe an oath of obedience. Whereupon Archbishop Lanfranc was angry, and ordered the bishops, who had come there by Archbishop Lanfranc's command to do the service, and all the monks to unrobe themselves [to take off the vestments they had put on for Thomas's investment ceremony]. And they did so at his order. Therefore Thomas departed without consecration for the time being. Soon after this, it happened that Archbishop Lanfranc went to Rome, and Thomas accompanied him. When they arrived there, and had spoken about other things concerning which they wished to speak, then Thomas began his speech: how he came to Canterbury, and how the archbishop required obedience from him with an oath, but he declined it. Then began Archbishop Lanfranc to show with clear distinction, that what he asked he asked by right; and with strong arguments he confirmed the same before Pope Alexander, and before all the council that was collected there; and so they went home. After this Thomas came to Canterbury, and humbly fulfilled all that the archbishop required of him, and afterward received consecration. . . .

A.D. 1085. In this year men reported, and truthfully asserted, that Cnut, king of Denmark, son of King Swein, was coming in this direction, and was resolved to win this land with the assistance of Robert, earl of Flanders; for Cnut had married Robert's daughter. When William, king of England, who was then resident in Normandy (for he ruled both England and Normandy), understood this, he went into England with so large an army of mounted troops and footsoldiers from France and Brittany as never before sought this land, so that men wondered how this land could feed all that force. But the king left the army to shift for themselves through all this land among his subjects, who fed them, each according to his quota of land. Men suffered much distress this year, and the king caused the land to be laid waste about the seacoast, so that, if his foes landed, they would not have anything on which they could very readily seize. But when the king truly understood that his foes were impeded, and could not further their expedition, then he let some of his army go home to their own land; but some he held in England over the winter.

Then, at midwinter, the king was in Gloucester with his council, and held his court there for five days. And afterward the archbishop and clergy held a synod for three days. There Mauritius was chosen bishop of London, William bishop of Norfolk, and Robert bishop of Cheshire. These were all the king's clerks. After this the king had a large meeting, and very deep consultation with his council, about this land—how it was occupied and by what sort of men. Then he sent his men over all England into each shire, commissioning them to find out how many hundreds of hides were in the shire, what land the king

himself had, and what livestock upon the land, or what income he ought to have annually from the shire. Also he commissioned them to record in writing, how much land his archbishops had, and his diocesan bishops, and his abbots, and his earls; and though I may be prolix and tedious, [he also wanted to know] what or how much each man had, who was an occupier of land in England, either in land or in livestock, and how much money it was worth. So very specifically, indeed, did he order them to trace it out, that there was not one single hide, nor a yard of land, no, moreover (it is shameful to tell, though he thought it no shame to do it), not even an ox, nor a cow, nor a swine was left, that was not set down in his record. And all the written particulars were afterward brought to him.

A.D. 1086. This year the king wore his crown and held his court in Winchester at Easter, and he so arranged it that he was at Westminster by Pentecost [24 May], and dubbed his son Henry a knight there. Afterward he moved about so that he came to Salisbury by Lammas [1 August], where he was met by his councilors; there all the local English that were of any importance over all England became this man's [King William's] vassals, . . . and they all bowed before him, and became his men, and swore him oaths of allegiance that they would be faithful to him against all other men. From there he proceeded into the Isle of Wight, because he wished to go into Normandy, and so he afterward did, though first, according to his custom, he collected a very large sum from his people, wherever he could make any demand, whether with justice or otherwise. Then he went into Normandy, and Edgar Etheling, the relation of King Edward, revolted against him, for he received not much honor from him; but may the almighty God give him honor hereafter. And Christina, the sister of [Edgar] the etheling, went into the monastery of Romsey, and received the holy veil. And the same year there was a very heavy season, and a troublesome and sorrowful year in England, in murrain of cattle, and corn and fruits did not grow, and so much trouble in the weather, as you might not believe; so tremendous was the thunder and lightning, that it killed many men; and it continually grew worse and worse for men. May almighty God improve things whenever he wills it.

A.D. 1087. 1087 winters after the birth of our Lord and Savior Christ, in the twenty-first year after William began to govern and direct England, as God granted him, there was a very heavy and pestilent season in this land. Such a sickness came on men, that nearly every other man had the worst disorder, that is, diarrhea, and that so dreadfully, that many men died from the disorder. Afterward, through the badness of the weather as we mentioned before, such a great famine came over all England that many hundreds of men died a

miserable death through hunger. Alas! how wretched and how rueful a time it was! When the poor wretches lay nearly driven to death prematurely, and afterward came sharp hunger and dispatched them altogether! Who will not be full of grief at such a season? Or who is so hardhearted as not to weep at such misfortune? Yet such things happen for folks' sins, because they will not love God and righteousness. So it was in those days, that little righteousness was in this land with any men except the monks alone, wherever they lived well. The king and the head-men were far too greedy for gold and silver and did not care how sinfully it was acquired, provided it came to them. The king leased out his land at as high a rate as he possibly could; then came some other person, and offered more than the first one gave, and the king leased it out to the man who offered him more. Then came the third, and offered yet more; and the king handed it over to the man that offered him most of all. And he cared not how very sinfully the stewards got it from wretched men, nor how many unlawful deeds they did; but the more men spoke about right law, the more unlawfully they acted. They exacted unjust tolls, and they did many other unjust things that are difficult to reckon.

Also in the same year, before harvest, the holy minster of Saint Paul, the episcopal see in London, was completely burned, with many other minsters, and the greatest and richest part of the whole city. So also, about the same time, almost every major port in all England was entirely burned. Alas! rueful and woeful was the fate of the year that brought forth so many misfortunes.

In the same year also, before the Assumption of Saint Mary [15 August], King William went from Normandy into France with an army, and made war upon his own lord Philip, the king [of France], and slew many of his men, and burned the town of Mantes, and all the holy minsters that were in the town; and two holy men that served God, leading the life of anchorites, were burned therein. This being thus done, King William returned to Normandy. Rueful was the thing he did, but a more rueful befell him. How was it more rueful? He fell sick, and it dreadfully ailed him. What shall I say? Sharp death, which passes by neither rich men nor poor, seized him also. He died in Normandy, on the day after the nativity of Saint Mary [9 September], and was buried at Caen in Saint Stephen's minster, which he had formerly built, and afterward endowed with manifold gifts. Alas! how false and how uncertain is this world's wealth! He who was before a rich king, and lord of many lands, had not then of all his land more than a space of seven feet! And he that was formerly clothed in gold and gems, lay there covered with mold! He left behind three sons: the eldest, called Robert, who was earl in Normandy after him; the

second, called William, who wore the crown after him in England; and the third, called Henry, to whom his father bequeathed immense treasure.

If any person wishes to know what kind of man [William] was, or what honor he had, or of how many lands he was lord, then will we write about him as well as we understand him: we who often looked upon him, and lived sometime in his court. This King William that we speak about was a very wise man, and very rich, more splendid and powerful than any of his predecessors. He was mild to the good men that loved God, and severe beyond all measure to the men who opposed his will. On that same spot where God granted him that he should gain England, he built a mighty minster [Battle Abbey], and set monks in it, and well endowed it. In his days the great monastery in Canterbury was built, and also very many others over all England. This land was moreover well filled with monks, who modeled their lives after the rule of Saint Benedict. . . . He was also very dignified. He wore his crown three times each year, as often as he was in England. At Easter he wore it in Winchester, at Pentecost in Westminster, at midwinter in Gloucester. And then all the rich men from over all England were with him, archbishops and diocesan bishops, abbots and earls, thegns and knights. So very stern was he also and hot-tempered, that no man dared do anything against his will. He took into custody earls who acted against his will. Bishops he hurled from their bishoprics, and abbots from their abbacies, and thegns into prison. Eventually he did not spare even his own brother Odo, who was a very rich bishop in Normandy. Odo's episcopal stall was at Bayeux, and he was the foremost man of all to glorify the king. He had an earldom in England, and when the king was in Normandy, then was Odo the mightiest man in England. William confined Odo in prison. But among other things we must not forget the good peace that he made in this land, so that a man of any account might go over his kingdom unhurt with his bosom full of gold [carrying a bag of gold inside his shirt]. No man dared slay another, no matter how much evil he had done to the other; and if any peasant had sex with a woman against her will, he soon lost the limb that he played with. He truly reigned over England, and by his authority so thoroughly surveyed it, that there was not a hide of land in England that he knew not who had it, or what it was worth, and afterward set it down in his book. The land of the Welsh was in his power, and he built castles there, and ruled Anglesey altogether. So also he subdued Scotland by his great strength. As to Normandy, that was his native land, but he also reigned over the earldom called Maine, and if he had yet lived two years more, he would have won Ireland by his valor, and without any weapons.

Assuredly in his time men had much distress, and very many sorrows. He let men build castles and miserably oppress the poor. The king himself was so very rigid and extorted from his subjects many marks of gold and so many hundred pounds of silver, which he took from his people for little need, by right and by unright. He fell into covetousness, and he loved greediness excessively. He made many deer-parks, and he established laws for them, so that whoever slew a hart or a hind [a male or female deer] should be deprived of his eyesight. As he forbade men to kill the harts, so also the boars, and he loved the tall deer as if he were their father. Likewise he decreed that the hares should go free. His rich men bemoaned it, and the poor men shuddered at it. But he was so stern that he did not care about the hatred of them all, for they must follow the king's will entirely, if they would live, or have land or possessions or even his peace. Alas! that any man should presume so to puff himself up, and boast over all men. May the Almighty God show mercy to his soul, and grant him forgiveness of his sins! These things have we written concerning him, both good and evil that men may choose the good after their goodness, and flee from the evil altogether, and follow the way that leads us to the kingdom of heaven. . . .

Questions: How does the author present Kings Edward, Harold, and William? How did the Norman Conquest affect England, according to this source? Are there any indications of the author's political sympathies? What events other than national political ones are of interest to the chronicler, and why? What impact did national events have locally?

20. The Text of the Bayeux Tapestry

The Bayeux Tapestry, a unique pictorial narrative, is a series of scenes embroidered on linen with a running Latin commentary above. Although we do not know who designed or executed the embroidery, historians think it was created sometime in the last third of the eleventh century, perhaps at, or in association with, the monastery of Saint Augustine in Canterbury. It presents a Norman version of the story of King Harold and William the Conqueror. The entire text, and some of the scenes, are reproduced here.

Source: trans. E. Amt from *The Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. D.M. Wilson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), plates 1–73.

King Edward (*figure 8*). Where Harold, duke of the English, and his knights are riding to Bosham church (*figure 9*). Where Harold sails

the sea (*figure 10*) and, with sails full of wind, comes to the land of Count Guy [of Ponthieu]. [Here is] Harold. Where Guy is arresting Harold and has led him to Beaurain and has held him there. Where Harold and Guy are conversing.

Fig. 8.

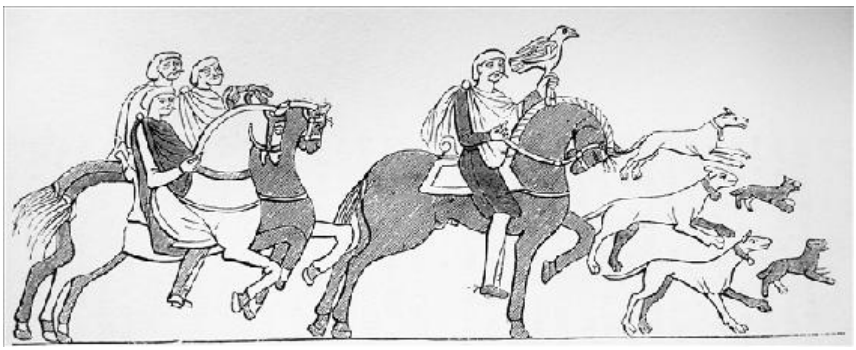

Fig. 9.

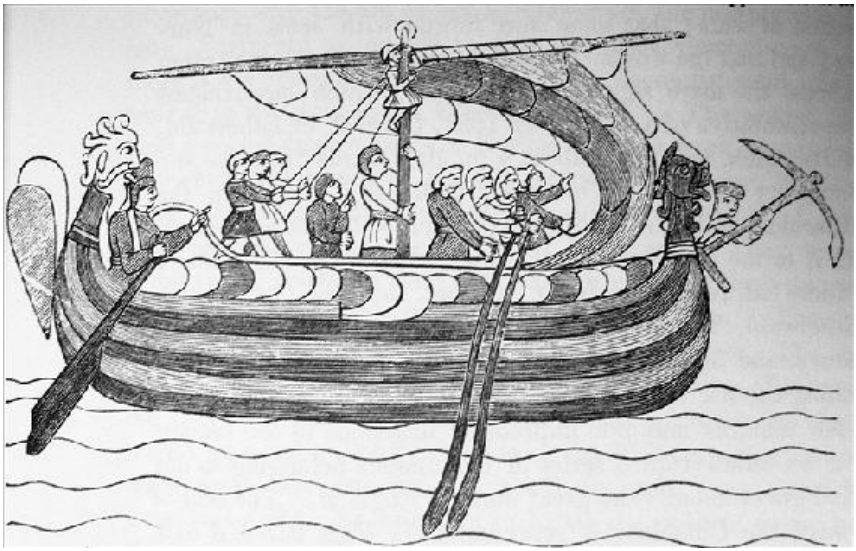

Fig. 10.

Here Duke William's messengers have come to Guy. Turold. William's messengers. Here a messenger has come to Duke William. Here Guy has brought Harold to William, duke of the Normans. Here Duke William has come to his palace with Harold (*figure 11*). Here [is] a certain clerk and Ælfgyva. Here Duke William and his army have come to Mont-Saint-Michel. And here they have crossed the River Couesnon. Here Duke Harold has pulled them out of the sands. And they have come to Dol [to attack Duke Conan of Brittany], and Conan turns and flees. Rennes. Here Duke William's knights are fighting against Dinan, and Conan has offered them the keys. Here William has given Harold arms. Here William comes to Bayeux, where Harold takes an oath to Duke William (*figure 12*).

Fig. 11.

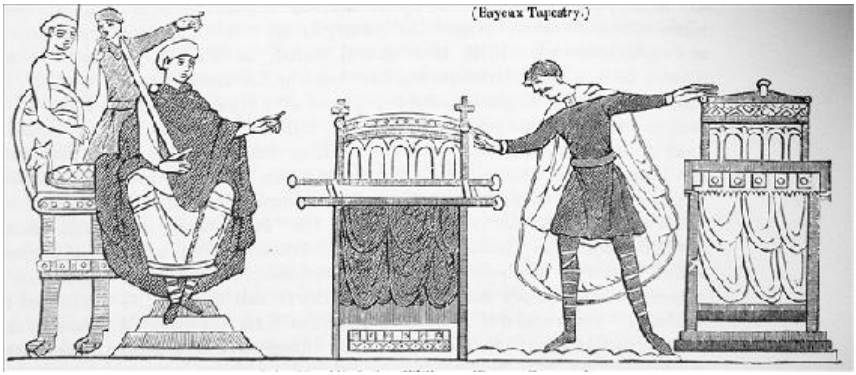

Fig. 12.

Fig. 13.

Here Duke Harold has returned to the land of England and comes to King Edward (*figure 13*). Here King Edward, on his deathbed, addresses his trusty friends. And here he has died (*figure 14*). Here the body of King Edward is carried to the church of Saint Peter the apostle [Westminster Abbey] (*figure 15*). Here they have given the king's crown to Harold.

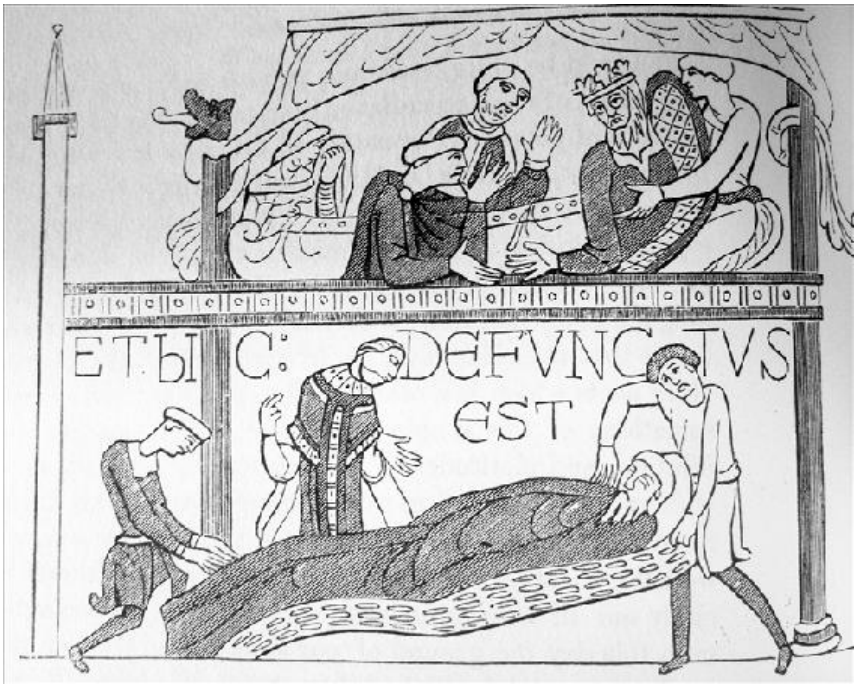

Fig. 14.

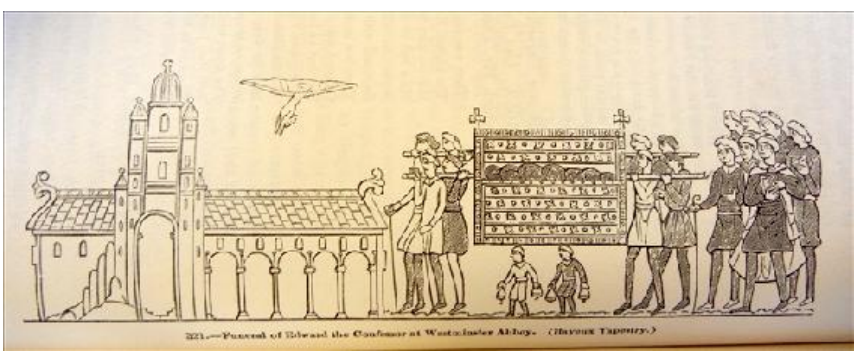

Fig. 15.

Here sits Harold, king of the English (*figure 16*). (Archbishop Stigand.) These men are marveling at the star [Halley's Comet]. [Here is] Harold. Here an English ship comes to the land of Duke William. Here Duke William has ordered ships to be built (*figure 17*).

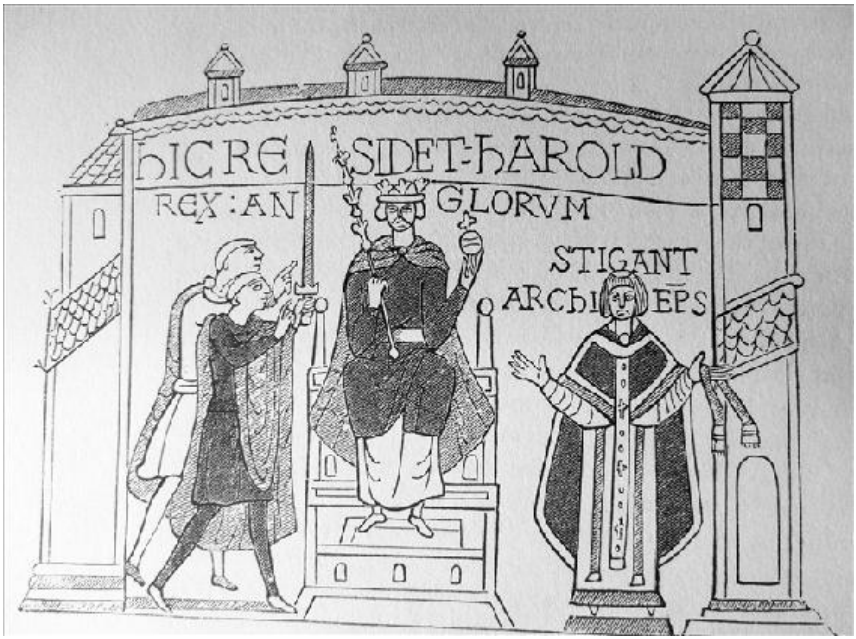

Fig. 16.

Fig. 17.

Here they are dragging the ships to the sea. These men are carrying arms to the ships. And here they are pulling a cart with wine and arms (*figure 18*). Here Duke William, in a great ship, has crossed the sea and comes to Pevensey (*figure 19*).

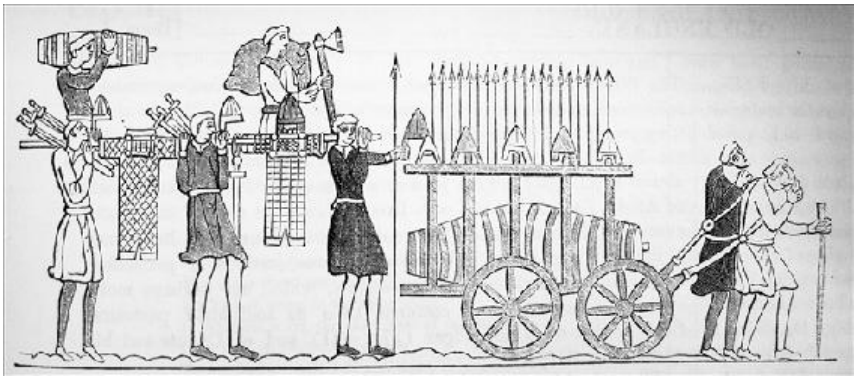

Fig. 18.

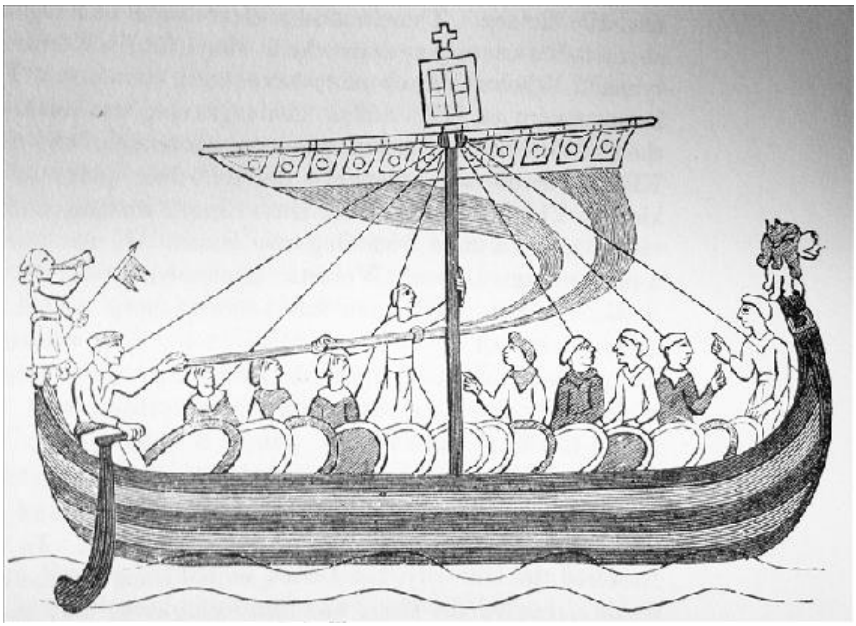

Fig. 19.

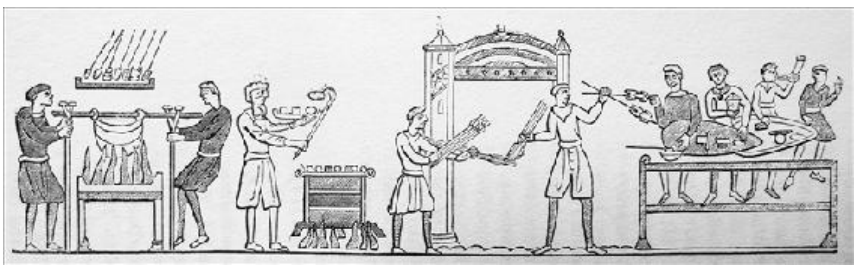

Fig. 20.

Here the horses are getting out of the ships. And here the knights hurry to Hastings to seize supplies. Here is Wadard. Here meat is

being cooked. And here the servants have been preparing, and here they have served, the midday meal (*figure 20*). And here the bishop [William's brother Odo, bishop of Bayeux] blesses the food and drink (*figure 21*). [Here is] Bishop Odo. [Here is] William. [Here is] Robert. This man has ordered that a castle be constructed at Hastings. Here reports about Harold have been brought to William. Here a house is being burned.

Fig. 21.

Here the knights have left Hastings and have come to the battle against King Harold. Here Duke William asks Vital whether he has seen Harold's army.

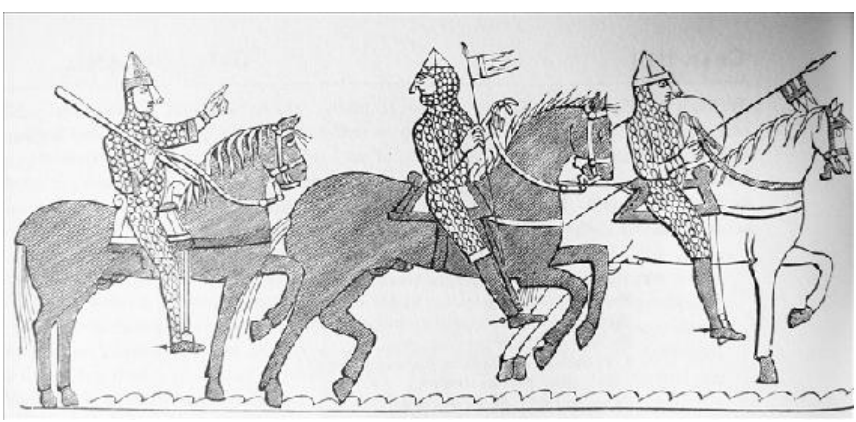

Fig. 22.

Fig. 23.

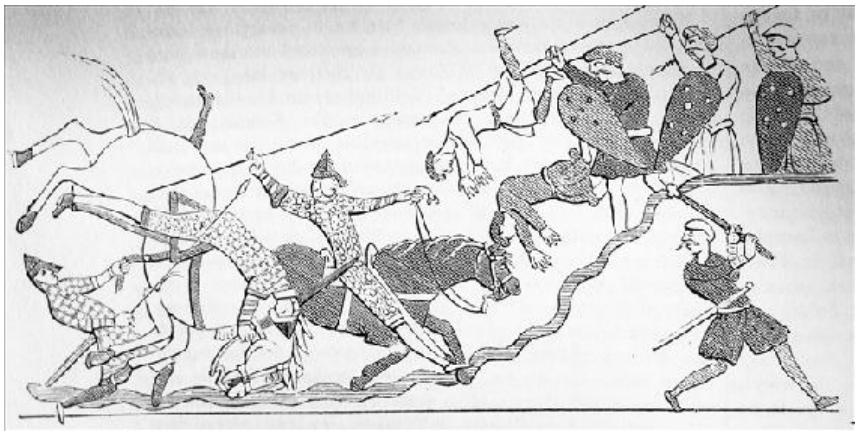

Fig. 24.

Fig. 25.

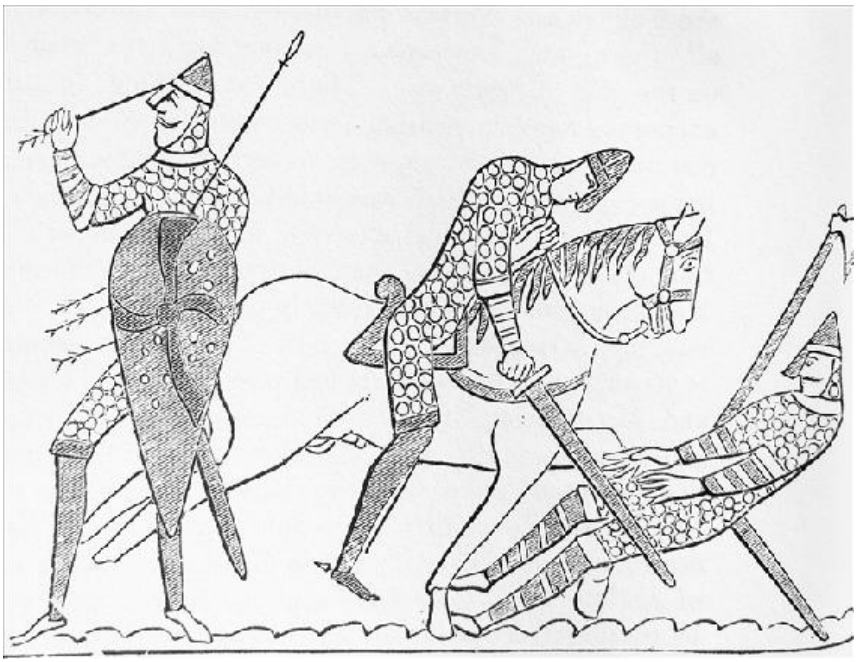

Fig. 26.

This man reports to Harold about Duke William's army. Here Duke William exhorts his knights to prepare themselves manfully and wisely for battle against the English army (*figures 22, 23*).

Here Leofwine and Gyrth, King Harold's brothers, have been killed.

Here English and French together have been killed in battle (*figure 24*).

Here Bishop Odo, holding a staff, encourages the young men. Here is Duke William [showing his face to the troops] (*figure 25*). [Here is] Eustace. Here the French are fighting.

And those who were with Harold have been killed. Here King Harold has been killed (*figure 26*). And the English have turned in flight.

Questions: Why would the tapestry's designer(s) have included Harold's adventures in Normandy? How is the Norman viewpoint evident? Compare this account with that in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (doc. 19). What does the tapestry reveal about warfare, everyday life, and material culture in the eleventh century?

21. Doing Penance for the Norman Victory

While pro-Norman historians presented the Norman Conquest as a just war sanctioned by the papacy, the eleventh-century Church felt a deep ambivalence about warfare between Christians. Issued by Norman bishops about four years following the Conquest, the following ordinances set forth the spiritual penalties to be paid by followers of Duke William of Normandy, now William I of England (r. 1066–87) for their role in the bloodbath at Hastings and the ravaging of the English countryside in the months afterward.

Source: ed. R. Allen Brown, *The Norman Conquest of England: Sources and Documents* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1984; repr. 1995), pp. 156–57.

This is the institution of penance according to the decrees of the bishops of the Normans, confirmed by the authority of the supreme pontiff by his legate Ermenfrid, bishop of Sion, to be imposed upon those whom W[illiam] duke of the Normans by his command . . . [text missing] and who before this decree were his men and owed him military service as their duty.

1. Whoever knows that he has killed in the great battle is to do one year's penance for each man slain.

2. Whoever struck another but does not know if that man was thereby slain, is to do forty days penance for each case, if he can remember the number, either continuously or at intervals.

3. Whoever does not know the number of those he struck or killed shall, at the discretion of his bishop, do penance for one day a week for the rest of his life, or, if he is able, make amends either by building a church or by giving perpetual alms to one.

4. Those who struck no one yet wished to do so are to do penance for three days.

5. Clerks who fought, or were armed for the purpose of fighting, because they are forbidden to fight are to do penance according to the institutions of canon law as if they had sinned in their own country. The penance of monks is to be determined according to their rule and the judgment of their abbot.

6. Those who fought motivated only by gain are to know that they owe the same penance as for homicide; but because they fought in a public war the bishops out of mercy have assigned them three years' penance.

7. Archers who do not know how many they killed or wounded without killing are to do penance for three Lents.

8. That battle aside, whoever before the consecration of the king [William I] killed anyone offering resistance as he moved through the kingdom in search of supplies, is to do one year's penance for each person so slain. Anyone, however, who killed not in search of supplies but in looting, is to do three years' penance for each person so slain.

9. Whoever killed a man after the king's consecration is to do penance as for wilful homicide, with this exception, that if the person killed or struck was in arms against the king the penance shall be as above.

10. Those who committed adulteries or rapes or fornications shall do penance as though they had sinned in their own countries.

11. Similarly concerning the violation of churches. Things taken from a church are to be restored to the church from which they were taken if possible. If this is not possible, they are to be given to some other church. If such restoration is refused, the bishops have decreed that no one is to sell or buy the property.

Questions: In what ways does this text add to our knowledge about the Norman Conquest? What do we learn about the Church's

attitude toward war and related acts of violence? Did the author(s) of this document regard the Conquest as a just war?

22. Castles in Norman England

The Norman kings and their vassals transformed England's landscape by building hundreds of castles. Most early castles featured a steep-sided motte*, or earthen mound surmounted by a wooden or (less commonly) stone keep and protected by a wall, and a lower outer ward, or bailey, also protected by a defensive wall. In the decades after the Conquest, castles served as reminders of Norman might and deterrents to rebels. Many castle sites begun under William I and his sons continued to be defended and expanded for centuries, their wooden towers and palisades replaced by more permanent stone structures and periodically updated with new strategic features such as round towers, fortified gatehouses, and arrow-slits.*

The plan below shows the defenses of Corfe Castle in Dorset, begun by William I on a natural hill that commanded the main route through the Purbeck Hills. The site's strategic importance was such that the original castle (on the hilltop's northeastern corner) was partially constructed of stone. Henry I had a massive stone keep added to the motte*, and the site's defenses were further expanded in the following centuries. In 1139, Corfe withstood a siege by King Stephen, who raised a siege castle, a* motte*-and-bailey structure (marked as "The Rings" on the plan), but abandoned the assault when his rival, the empress Matilda, landed in England. We lack a detailed account of this siege, but the story of King Stephen's successful three-month siege of Exeter Castle in 1136, as told in the anonymous* Deeds of Stephen*, describes twelfth-century castle warfare and reminds us that the siege of Corfe could have turned out differently.*

Sources: E. Armitage, *The Early Norman Castles of the British Isles* (London: J. Murray, 1912), fig. 13 (facing p. 128); *Gesta Stephani*, ed. and trans. K.R. Potter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 33, 39, 41, 43.

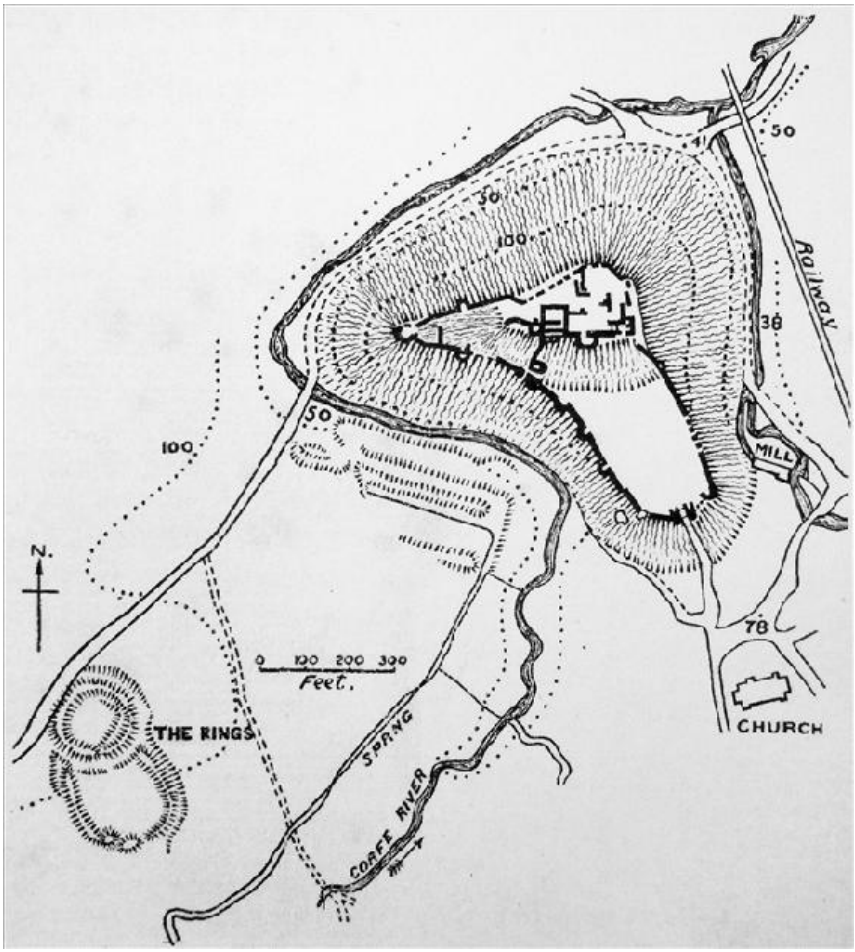

Fig. 27. Plan of Corfe Castle.

The Siege of Exeter, 1136

Exeter is a large town, with very ancient walls. . . . There is a castle in it raised on a very high mound surrounded by an impregnable wall and fortified with towers of hewn limestone. . . . In it, Baldwin de Redvers had placed a very strong force, no less than the flower of all England, chosen to resist the king. Bound by fealty and an oath never to yield to the king at all, they were shut up with his wife and children, ready for anything, and encircling the castle in close array with glittering arms they kept on hurling insults at the king and his men. Sometimes, too, sallying unexpectedly from secret posterns, they made violent charges with intent to inflict loss on the king's army; frequently they shot arrows or flung javelins from the battlements and showed an aggressive spirit in many other ways as occasion required. However, the king, with a number of barons who had either come

with him when he arrived or followed him speedily when they had gathered their forces, labored by many means to annoy them. For with a body of foot-soldiers, very completely equipped, he resolutely drove the enemy back and took an outwork raised on a very high mound to defend the castle, and he manfully broke the inner bridge, affording access from the castle to the city, and with wondrous art built great erections of timber as a hindrance to those trying to fight from the battlements. Also, day and night, he vigorously pressed on with the siege of the garrison; sometimes he joined battle with them by means of armed men crawling up the rampart; sometimes, by the aid of countless slingers, who had been hired from a distant region, he assailed them with an unendurable number of stones; at other times he summoned those who had skill in mining underground and ordered them to search into the bowels of the earth with a view to demolishing the wall; frequently, too, he devised engines of different sorts, some rising high in the air, others low on the ground, the former to spy out what was going on in the castle, the latter to shake or undermine the wall. The garrison on its side, offering a resolute and ready defense, cared nothing for all his engines, on which the cunning of the craftsmen had spent vast labor, so that with both parties putting vigor and resource into the struggle it was a great test of their shrewdness and quickness to act. . . .

In the meantime, while it was doubtful whether besiegers or defenders would prevail, and the king had stayed nearly three months there, with an expenditure on various items of as much as fifteen thousand marks, God, the disposer of all things, wishing to put an end to these great toils, so dried up the bountiful springs of the two wells in the castle, which had always bubbled with unfailing rills of water, that whereas formerly they had been fully enough for the daily needs of men and horses they were now hardly equal to allaying one man's thirst. . . . So, burdened beyond what could be thought possible by undending watchfulness, brought to utter exhaustion by the different kinds of warfare they waged on the enemy from the wall, and finally parched and wasted by violent and unendurable thirst, they took counsel for their common interest. [The defenders agreed to surrender the castle, and chose representatives to seek favorable terms from the king.] At once two of them, the first in rank and dignity of the whole castle, were sent to the king, men already skilled to adorn their speech with charm and give their words, whenever it suited them, the turn that wisdom and eloquence most required. But he, under the persuasion of his brother the bishop of Winchester's advice, showed them a front of iron. . . . Baldwin's wife, too, unable to bear this harsh rejection of her companions, came to the king to offer entreaty on their behalf, barefooted, with her hair loose on her shoulders, and

shedding floods of tears. He received her kindly, without haughtiness, both on account of the piety he felt for one of her sex in such wretched affliction and because of the high-born woman's relations and friends who were toiling there with him in the siege, but after listening to her mournful and piteous supplications about the surrender of the castle he hardened his heart inexorably yet again and at last sent her back to her companions with nothing accomplished. [Eventually, Stephen's advisors convinced him to accept the surrender of the garrison.] The king, encircled by a great number of barons, who not only besought him with entreaties but also influenced him by advice, at last gave way and granted their requests, and that he might win their closer attachment and have them more devoted to his service he allowed the besieged not only to go forth in freedom but also to take away their possessions and be the followers of any lord they willed. When they finally came forth you could have seen the body of each individual wasted and enfeebled with parching thirst, and once they were outside they hurried rather to drink a draught of any sort than to discharge any business whatsoever.

Questions: What are the strengths and weaknesses of Corfe Castle's defenses? What challenges did attackers and defenders face in the siege of Exeter? How was the castle finally taken? Apart from its military function, what roles (political, social, economic, symbolic) might a castle have served?

23. Domesday Book

In 1086 William the Conqueror ordered a far-reaching census to be taken of the lands and resources in England (as described above in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entry for the year 1085, the anomaly in years being due to different ways of calculating the "new year" in the Middle Ages). The resulting returns were condensed and compiled into the large volume known to later generations as "Domesday Book," because its testimony as to certain historical matters of status and tenure was the final authority and judgment. For historians, William's census is an incomparable snapshot of almost the entire kingdom, providing a wealth of statistical detail that we have for no other part of Europe at this time.

Source: trans. E. Amt from *Domesday Book 15: Gloucestershire*, ed. J.S. Moore (Chichester: Phillimore, 1982), sections 162a G, 162d [1], 166c 28, 167a, 167b 34.

Gloucestershire

In the time of King Edward the city of Gloucester paid £36 (in counted coin), twelve sesters of honey (by the measure of that borough), 36 dickers of iron, 100 iron rods for nails for the king's ships, and certain other minor customary payments in the king's hall and chamber. Now the city itself pays the king £60 at the rate of 20d. per *ora*. And the king receives £20 from the mint.

In the demesne land of the king, Roger de Berkeley holds one house and one fishery in the town itself, and it is outside the king's hand. Baldwin held this in the time of King Edward.

Bishop Osbern holds the land and dwellings which Edmar held; he pays 10s. with another customary payment.

Geoffrey de Mandeville holds six dwellings. In the time of King Edward these paid 6s. 8d. with another customary payment.

William Baderon holds two dwellings at 30d.

William the scribe holds one dwelling at 51d.

Roger de Lacy holds one dwelling at 26d.

Bishop Osbern holds one dwelling at 41d.

Berner holds one dwelling at 14d.

William Bald holds one dwelling at 12d.

Durand the sheriff holds two dwellings at 14d.

The same Durand holds one dwelling at 26d. and also one dwelling which renders no customary payment.

Hadwin holds one dwelling which pays rent but keeps back another customary payment.

Gosbert holds one dwelling; Dunning holds one dwelling; Widard holds one dwelling.

Arnulf the priest holds one dwelling which pays rent and keeps back another customary payment.

All these dwellings paid the royal customary payments in the time of King Edward. Now King William receives nothing from them, nor does Robert his official. These dwellings were in King Edward's farm [his assets producing a fixed income] on the day he was alive and dead. But now they have been removed from the farm and from the king's customary payments.

In the time of King Edward the king's demesne in the city supplied all lodging and clothing. When Earl William took it into his farm it continued to supply clothing.

Sixteen houses used to be where the castle stands; now they are gone. And in the borough of the city fourteen houses have been destroyed. . . .

The King's Land

King Edward held Cheltenham. There were eight and a half hides. One and a half hides belong to the Church; Reinbald holds them. In demesne were three plows, and twenty villeins and ten bordars [unfree peasants] and seven slaves with eighteen plows. The priests had two plows. There were two mills at 11s. 8d. King William's reeve added to this manor two bordars and four villeins and three mills, of which two are the king's and the third the reeve's, and one additional plow there. In the time of King Edward it paid £9 5s., and 3,000 loaves of bread for dogs. Now it pays £20, twenty cows, 20 pigs, and 16s. for loaves of bread.

In King's Barton King Edward had nine hides. Of these, seven were in demesne, where there are three plows, and fourteen villeins and ten bordars with nine plows. There are seven slaves. Two free men hold two hides from this manor and have there nine plows. They cannot separate themselves or their land from the manor. There was a mill at 4s. King William's reeve added eight bordars and two mills and one plow. In the time of King Edward it paid £9 5s., and 3,000 loaves of bread for dogs. Now it pays £20, twenty cows, twenty pigs, and 16s. for loaves of bread.

Archbishop Ældred leased Brawn, a part of this manor. There were three virgates of land and three men there. Miles Crispin holds it now.

Alwin the sheriff leased another part, by the name of Upton. There was one hide of land and there are four men. Humfrey holds it now.

The same Alwin leased another part, by the name of Murrells. There are three virgates of land there. Nigel the physician holds it now. . . .

In Botloe Hundred

King Edward held Dymock. There were twenty hides and two plows in demesne there, and forty-two villeins and ten bordars and eleven freedmen having forty-one plows. There is a priest holding twelves acres there. There are four *radknights* [tenants owing escort duty] with four plows. There is woodland three leagues long and one league wide. The sheriff paid what he wished from this manor in the time of King Edward. King William held it in his demesne for four years. After that Earl William and his son Roger had it; on what terms, the men of the county do not know. Now it pays £21. . . .

Earl Hugh's Land

In Bisley Hundred

Earl Hugh holds Bisley, and Robert holds it from him. There are eight hides there. In demesne there are four plows, and twenty villeins and twenty-eight bordars with twenty plows. There are six male slaves and four female slaves. There are two priests and eight *radknights* who have ten plows, and twenty-three other men who pay 44s. and two sesters of honey. There are five mills there at 16s. and woodland at 20s. And in Gloucester there are eleven burgesses who pay 66d. It was worth £24; now it is worth £20.

In Longtree Hundred

The same earl holds Westonbirt. Alnoth held it in the time of King Edward. There are three hides there which pay geld. In this hundred Leofwin held one hide.

In the same place the earl himself holds one hide at Througham. Leofnoth held it from King Edward and could go where he wished. This land pays geld. There are four bordars there with one plow and four acres of meadow. It is worth 20s.

In the same place the earl himself holds half a hide which Roger de Lacy claims at Edgeworth, as the county testifies. It is worth 10s. and pays geld.

In Witley Hundred

The earl himself holds Chipping Camden. Earl Harold held it. Fifteen hides pay geld there. In demesne are six plows, and fifty villeins and eight bordars with twenty-one plows. There are twelve slaves and two mills at 6s. 2d. There are three female slaves there. It was worth £30; now it is worth £20.

In Longtree Hundred

The earl himself holds two manors of four hides which pay geld, and two of his men hold them from him. Alnoth and Leofwin held them in the time of King Edward. There was no one who could answer for these lands, but they are valued by the men of the county at £8. . . .

Land of William Goizenboded

In Chelthorn Hundred

William Goizenboded holds Pebworth from the king. Wulfgeat and Wulfward held it in the time of King Edward as two manors. There are six hides and one virgate there. In demesne there is one plow, and one bordar and one slave. It was worth £7; now it is worth £4 10s.

The same William holds Ullington. One thegn held it in the time of King Edward. There are five hides there. In demesne are two plows, and two villeins and one Frenchman hold one and a half hides with one plow. Earl Algar made this manor part of Pebworth. It was worth 100s.; now it is worth 40s.

In Holmford Hundred

The same William holds Farmcote. Alwin held it. There are three hides which pay geld there. In demesne there are two plows, and four villeins with four plows, and thirteen male and female slaves. Geoffrey holds it from William. It was worth £10; now it is worth £3.

The same William holds Guiting Power. King Edward held it and leased it to Alwin his sheriff to have for his lifetime. But he did not give it as a gift, as the county testifies. When Alwin died, King William gave his wife and lands to a young man named Richard. Now Richard's successor William holds this land thus. There are ten hides, of which nine pay geld. In demesne there are four plows, and four villeins and three Frenchmen and two *radknights* and a priest, with two bordars; all the men have five plows between them. There are eleven male and female slaves and two mills at 14s. Five salt-houses there pay twenty loads of salt. In Winchcombe two burgesses pay 11s. 4d. It was worth £16; now it is worth £6.

Questions: How is Domesday Book organized? How are people classified? What differences between towns and the countryside are evident? Which properties are most valuable? What kinds of revenue do the king and lords receive? What changes have occurred since the time of King Edward?

24. Orderic Vitalis's Account of his Life

Orderic Vitalis (1075–ca 1142), one of the great historians of the Anglo-Norman world, ended his lengthy history with the following brief account of his own life. It is included here as an example of the experience of a child born after the Conquest, to an English mother and Norman father, and of a common type of monastic career, that of a child oblate, in the last quarter of the eleventh century.

Source: trans. M. Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, 6 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969–80), vol. 6, pp. 551, 553, 555, 557.

Now indeed, worn out with age and infirmity, I long to bring this book to an end, and it is plain that many good reasons urge me to do

so. For I am now in the sixty-seventh year of my life and service to my lord Jesus Christ, and while I see the princes of this world overwhelmed by misfortunes and disastrous setbacks I myself, strengthened by the grace of God, enjoy the security of obedience and poverty. . . . I give thanks to you, supreme king, who freely created me and ordained my life according to your gracious will. For you are my king and my God, and I am your servant and the son of your handmaid, one who from the beginning of my life has served you as far as I was able. I was baptized on Holy Saturday at Atcham, a village in England on the great river Severn. There you caused me to be reborn of water and the Holy Spirit by the hand of Orderic the priest, and imparted to me the name of that priest, my godfather. Afterward when I was five years old, I was put to school in the town of Shrewsbury, and performed my first clerical duties for you in the church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul the apostles. There Siward, an illustrious priest, taught me my letters for five years, and instructed me in psalms and hymns and other necessary knowledge. Meanwhile you honored this church on the River Meole, which belonged to my father, and built a holy monastery there through the piety of Earl Roger. It was not your will that I should serve you longer in that place, for fear that I might be distracted among kinsfolk, who are often a burden and a hindrance to your servants, or might in some way be diverted from obeying your law through human affection for my family. And so, O glorious God, who commanded Abraham to depart from his country and from his kindred and from his father's house, you inspired my father Odelerius to renounce me utterly, and submit me in all things to your governance. So, weeping, he gave me, a weeping child, into the care of the monk Reginald, and sent me away into exile for love of you and never saw me again. And I, a mere boy, did not presume to oppose my father's wishes, but obeyed him willingly in all things, for he promised me in your name that if I became a monk I should taste the joys of Paradise with the Innocents after my death. So with this pact freely made between me and you, for whom my father spoke, I abandoned my country and kinsfolk, my friends and all with whom I was acquainted, and they, wishing me well, with tears commended me in their kind prayers to you, O almighty God, Adonai. Receive, I beg thee, the prayers of these people and, O compassionate God of Sabaoth, mercifully grant what they asked for me.

And so, a boy of ten, I crossed the English Channel and came into Normandy as an exile, unknown to all, knowing no one. Like Joseph in Egypt, I heard a language which I did not understand. But you suffered me through your grace to find nothing but kindness and friendship among strangers. I was received as an oblate monk in the

abbey of Saint-Évroul by the venerable Abbot Mainer in the eleventh year of my age, and was tonsured as a clerk on Sunday, 21 September. In place of my English name, which sounded harsh to the Normans, the name Vitalis was given me, after one of the companions of Saint Maurice the martyr, whose feast was being celebrated at that time. I have lived as a monk in that abbey by your favor for fifty-six years, and have been loved and honored by all my fellow monks and companions far more than I deserved. I have labored among your servants in the vineyard of the choice vine, bearing heat and cold and the burden of the day, and I have waited knowing that I shall receive the penny that you have promised, for you keep faith. I have revered six abbots as my fathers and masters because they were your vicars: Mainer and Serlo, Roger and Warin, Richard and Ralph. . . . On 15 March, when I was sixteen years old, at the command of Serlo, abbot elect, Gilbert, bishop of Lisieux, ordained me subdeacon. Then two years later, on 26 March, Serlo, bishop of Séez, laid the stole of the diaconate on my shoulders, and I gladly served you as a deacon for fifteen years. At length in my thirty-third year William, archbishop of Rouen, laid the burden of priesthood on me on 21 December. On the same day he also blessed two hundred and twenty priests, with whom I reverently approached your holy altar, filled with the Holy Spirit; and I have now loyally performed the sacred offices for you with a joyful heart for thirty-four years. . . .

Questions: How does Orderic's account of his life reflect the times he lived in and his profession? What is his attitude toward his childhood? What does the text suggest about the rationale of child oblation to monastic houses?

25. Anselm of Canterbury on His Feud with William Rufus

In 1070 William I appointed his spiritual advisor, Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury and tasked him with the administrative and physical reconstruction of the Anglo-Saxon Church. At Lanfranc's death in 1089, William I's son, William II, left the see of Canterbury vacant for years while he pocketed its income. In 1093, believing himself near death, William II consented to the election of Lanfranc's protégé, the ardent reformer Anselm, as archbishop of Canterbury. William recovered, but he and Anselm soon clashed: they backed different candidates in the ongoing papal schism and disagreed about how much control kings should exercise over the Church. Anselm fled England in 1097 and spent three years on the continent. In this letter the exiled Anselm recounts his falling-out with the king and pleads his case to the newly elected pope

Paschal II.

Source: trans. W. Fröhlich, *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1993), vol. 2, pp. 156–59.

Anselm to Pope Paschal II (late 1099 or early 1100)

To his reverend lord and father Paschal, supreme pontiff: Anselm, servant of the church of Canterbury, sending due subjection from the bottom of his heart and the devotion of his prayers, for what they are worth.

The reason why I delayed so long sending a message to your highness after we thanked God and rejoiced at the certain news of your elevation [to the papal throne], was that a messenger from the king of the English came to the venerable archbishop of Lyon to discuss our case, yet without offering anything which could be accepted. Having heard the archbishop's reply he went back to the king, promising to return to Lyon very soon. I awaited him there in order to learn something I could tell you about the king's intention but he did not come. Therefore I shall state my case to you briefly because, when I was staying in Rome I often spoke about it to the lord Pope Urban [II, Paschal's predecessor] and to many others, as I expect your holiness knows.

In England I saw many evils which it was my duty to correct, but I could neither correct them nor tolerate them without committing a sin. The king demanded of me that in the name of righteousness I should give my consent to his intentions which were against the law and the will of God. For he was unwilling that the pope should be acknowledged or appealed to in England without his command, or that I should send the pope a letter, or receive one sent by him, or obey his decrees. He has not permitted a council to be held in his kingdom since he became king thirteen years ago. He gave church lands to his own men. When I sought advice on all these and other similar matters, everybody in his kingdom, even my own suffragan bishops, refused to give me any counsel except that which agreed with the king's will. Seeing these and many other things contrary to the will and law of God, I begged the king's leave to go to the apostolic see so that there I might receive counsel for my soul and for the office laid upon me. The king replied that I had offended him solely by asking for this leave and demanded that either I should give him satisfaction for doing so, as if for an offense, and an assurance that I would never again ask for this leave or at any time appeal to the pope, or else I should leave his realm forthwith. I chose to leave rather than

to consent to such an abominable thing. I came to Rome, as you know, and set the whole matter before the lord pope. No sooner had I left England than the king openly laid a tax on the food and clothing of our monks, invaded the entire archbishopric [of Canterbury] and turned it to his own use. He was admonished and entreated by the lord pope [Urban II] to put this right, but he scorned this and still persists. It is now already the third year since I left England. I have spent the little which I took with me as well as much which I borrowed and which I still owe. Thus, owing more than I have, being detained at the house of our venerable father, the archbishop of Lyon, I am supported by his kind generosity and generous kindness.

I do not say this as if longing to return to England but fearing that your highness may be angry with me if I do not notify you about my situation. Therefore I pray and beseech you, with as much fervor as I can, not to command me to return to England under any circumstances, unless in such a way that I be allowed to place the law and will of God and the apostolic decrees above the will of man, and unless the king restores to me the church lands and whatever he took from the archbishopric because I appealed to the apostolic see, or indeed offers fair compensation to the Church for all those things. Otherwise I would make it appear that I put man before God and that I was justly despoiled for wanting to have recourse to the apostolic see. It is quite obvious what an injurious and detestable example this would be for my successors.

Some ill-informed people inquire as why I do not excommunicate the king; but those who are wiser and have well-advised opinions counsel me not to do that, for it is not up to me both to lodge the complaint and to pronounce the punishment. Moreover, I have been told by my friends who are under that king that my excommunication, if pronounced, would be scorned by him and turned into ridicule. The prudence of your authority needs no advice from us on this matter.

We pray that almighty God may make all your actions pleasing to him and make his Church long rejoice about your rule and your prosperity. Amen.

Questions: What accusations does Anselm make against William II? How did William and Anselm each define the relationship between royal authority and the Church in England? How did each attempt to gain the upper hand in their dispute? What does the document suggest about why kings might have opposed some aspects of Church reform?

26. Gilbert Crispin's *Disputation of a Jew with a Christian*

Gilbert Crispin, a Norman monk and scholar, was appointed abbot of Westminster Abbey in 1085. The Disputation *was written in the 1090s and inspired by discussions with Gilbert's friend Anselm of Canterbury, as well as by contact with members of London's Jewish community. Gilbert's Jewish interlocutor would have belonged to the first generation of Jews brought by King William I from Normandy. By 1100 Jewish communities were established in several English towns, their members defined as the king's property, and they were accordingly granted various privileges, including the right to travel without paying tolls and to swear oaths on the Torah rather than the Christian scriptures. The excerpts below give a good sense of the issues commonly raised in theological debates between Christians and Jews.*

Source: ed. Joseph Jacobs, *The Jews of Angevin England: Documents and Records* (London: David Nutt, 1893), pp. 7–12; revised, with additional material trans. K.A. Smith from *The Works of Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster*, ed. Anna Sapir Abulafia and G.R. Evans, Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi 8 (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1986), pp. 8–12, 15, 17–18, 27–29, 39–40, 50–51.

To the reverend father and lord Anselm, archbishop of the holy church of Canterbury, his servant and son, Brother Gilbert, proctor and servant of Westminster Abbey, wishes him happy longevity in this life and blissful eternity in the future one.

I send you a little work to be submitted to your fatherly prudence. I wrote it recently, putting to paper what a Jew said when formerly disputing with me against our faith in defense of his own law, and what I replied in favor of our faith against his objections. I do not know where he was born, but he was educated at Mainz; he was well versed even in our law and literature, and had a mind practiced in the scriptures and in disputes against us. He often used to come to me as a friend both for business and for the pleasure of seeing me, since in certain things I was very necessary to him, and as often as we came together we would soon begin talking in a friendly spirit about the scriptures and our faith. Now on a certain day, God granted both of us more leisure than usual, and soon we began questioning one another as we were accustomed to do. And as his objections were consistent and well-ordered, and as he explained his former objections equally well, and our reply responded to his objections point for point, and by his own admission seemed equally well supported by the testimony of the scriptures, some of the bystanders asked me to preserve our disputation, so that perhaps it might be of use to others in future. . . .

Here begins the disputation of a Jew with a Christian, as set forth

by Abbot Gilbert of Westminster.

THE JEW: Because Christians are accustomed to speak to you in learned letters and with eloquent speech, I ask you to bear with me in a spirit of tolerance. With what reason or by what authority do you blame us Jews because we observe the law given by God to the lawgiver Moses? For if it is a good law and given by God it should be observed. For whose command is to be observed if the orders of God are not to be obeyed? But if the law should be observed, why do you treat those who observe it like dogs, driving them away with sticks and pursuing them everywhere? . . .

THE CHRISTIAN: First, let us speak of the law which, we argue, is good and given by God. And therefore, everything written in scripture is to be understood in a divine sense and heeded in its season, and we confirm that it is to be observed. Indeed, we hold that the commands of the law are to be understood in a divine sense because, if men understood them in every sense and followed them to the letter, much confusion and contradiction would result. For example, when the creation of the world was complete, as Moses writes: "God saw all the things that he had made, and they were very good" (Genesis 1:31). How, then, can he later write of the separation of the animals into clean and unclean, into those which may be used and those which he orders may not even be touched under penalty of death (Leviticus 5:2, 11:24)? For how can that which is "unclean" be called "very good?" . . .

THE JEW: If the word of God is to be observed at one time or another, so that it is annulled at one time and to be observed at another, and thus in the vicissitude of time the divine sanctions are changed, how stands it with the verse, "And God has spoken once" (Psalm 61:12)? Why was it said, "Forever O Lord, your word will stand firm in heaven" (Psalm 118:89)? What difference does it make, I ask, why God judged this animal to be clean and that animal to be unclean, or permitted this one to be used and forbade that one to be used? For "Who has directed the Lord's spirit, or been his counselor" (Isaiah 40:3)? that he should permit this or forbid that? . . .

THE CHRISTIAN: It is true that God spoke once, and it is impossible that any word of God can be annulled: the divine sanctions are not changed by any vicissitudes of time, for Christ came not to deliver the law, but to fulfill it. As he says, "I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17–18). How

could Christ ever wish to condemn the law, as he threatens that "not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is fulfilled?" For he does not wish to dissolve the law but to fulfill it. The law prohibits homicide, Christ prohibits anger and hatred; the law forbids actual adultery, Christ himself even forbids carnal desire. The law forbids you to use pork, and at that time abstinence from that animal was necessary for you, since it was a symbol of future truth, and a symbol is to be preserved till the truth itself comes. But now it is necessary neither for you nor for us since the truth of the symbol is present. . . .

THE JEW: What reason, what scriptural authority is there, that I should believe that God can become a man, or come forth as a man already created? If there is no transmutation in God nor any shadow of change, how could it be believed that so great a change could occur in him that God could become man, the creator a creature, and the incorruptible corrupted? How, I ask, could we accept that "In the beginning, O Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands. They shall perish but you remain, and all of them shall grow old like a garment . . . But you are always the same, and your years shall never decline" (Psalm 101:26–28). How could God be always the same if he became a man? If he is infinite how could he be circumscribed in the mean and small dimensions of human limbs? . . .

THE CHRISTIAN: We do not fear any opposition to this revelation, nor are we afraid of finding any disagreement in the scriptures. But meanwhile let us unloose the scriptural authorities, upon which, with God's help, we will build a proof that God was made man and was seen by men. For openly and without any ambiguity Jeremiah the prophet speaks thus: "This is our God, and none will be likened to him. He has found the whole way of knowledge, and gave it to Jacob his son and Israel his elect: after this he was seen on earth and conversed with men" (Baruch 3:36–38). "After this," meaning after the law was given, after 'the way of knowledge was given to Jacob his son and Israel his elect, God was made man "and conversed with men," born from a virgin, from the closed womb of his mother, with his divinity preserved intact. . . .

THE JEW: From that very quotation of yours it can be established that the Christians should be confounded, for they "adore images and rejoice in their idols" (cf. Psalm 96:7). For you portray God himself as a wretch hanging on the beam of the cross transfixed with nails—a horrible sight, and yet you adore

it. . . . Other times you depict God sitting on a lofty throne and making signs with an outstretched hand, and around him, as if for greater dignity, an eagle and a man, a calf, and a lion. Christians sculpt and paint images, and they adore them and tend them, though the God-given law forbids this in every way. For it is written in Exodus (20:4–5): "You shall not make for yourself a graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters. You shall not adore them, nor serve them." Therefore the law condemns any graven image and judges it abhorrent.

THE CHRISTIAN: If the law condemns all sculpture and nothing is to be imitated in an effigy, Moses sinned, who figured and painted the likenesses of things; indeed, the Lord himself sinned, who commanded them to be figured and painted. . . . And so, when the Christian adores the cross, with the worship due to the divine religion, he adores the passion of Christ on the cross, who on account of mankind endured the passion in the person of God. . . . The Christian worships no image with divine worship, but he cherishes with honor the representation of sacred things, and honors figures and pictures.

Questions: What does the text tell us about Jewish-Christian interactions in Norman England? What theological issues divided Jews and Christians? How does each debater use reason and scriptural evidence to support his positions? How would you describe the debate's overall tone?

27. Church Reform: The Council of Westminster

In a process that paralleled the disenfranchisement of the Anglo-Saxon nobility, William I and his successors replaced the majority of Anglo-Saxon bishops and abbots with foreigners. Under the reforming archbishops of Canterbury Lanfranc (r. 1070–89) and Anselm (r. 1093–1109), the English Church was brought into the orbit of the reforming papacy, and new legislation was passed which outlawed simony (the buying and selling of church offices) and clerical marriage and generally required the clergy to live in a manner that distinguished them from, and underscored their spiritual superiority over, the laity. The first general council convened in England by Anselm, the Council of Westminster, echoes the agenda of the Gregorian Reform but expresses concerns particular to the English context.

Source: trans. H. Gee and W.J. Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of English Church History* (London: Macmillan, 1914), pp. 61–63; revised.

1. The cunning heresy of simony was condemned by the said council. The following were found guilty of this crime and deposed: Guy, abbot of Pershore, Wimund of Tavistock, and Ealdwine of Ramsey. Some others, who had not yet been consecrated, were removed from their abbacies, namely Godric of Peterborough, Hamo of Cerne, and Æthelric of Milton. . . .

2. Bishops are not to undertake the office [of judge] in secular cases, and are not to dress as laymen . . . , and are always and everywhere to have honest persons who may serve as witnesses to their conduct. . . .

5. That no archdeacon, priest, deacon, or canon is to marry or retain a wife, and that any subdeacon who is not a canon, having married after making a vow of chastity, be bound by the same rule.

6. That as long as a priest has illicit intercourse with a woman he is not a lawful priest, and so is not permitted to celebrate mass, and if he does so his mass is not to be attended.

7. That no one is to be ordained to the subdiaconate or a higher office without professing chastity.

8. That the sons of priests are not to inherit their fathers' churches.

9. That no clerks are to be the agents or proctors of secular men, nor serve as judges in capital cases.

10. That priests are not to go on drinking bouts. . . .

12. That monks or clerks who have forsaken their order must either return or be excommunicated.

13. That clerks must have visible tonsures.

15. That churches and prebends [income from churches] are not to be bought.

16. That no new chapels are to be founded without the bishop's consent. . . .

18. That abbots do not make knights, and that they eat and sleep in the same house with their monks except when they are prevented from doing so by necessity.

19. That monks impose no penance on any without permission of

their abbot, and that abbots can give such permission only to those over whom they have spiritual charge.

20. That monks not be godfathers, nor nuns godmothers. . . .

22. That monks accept no churches except through bishops, and that when these are given to them monks must not so deprive them of their rents that the priests serving there lack what is needed for themselves and the churches.

23. That marriage vows made in secret and without witnesses are to be considered void when denied by either party.

24. That men should wear their hair short enough that part of their ears be visible and their eyes not covered.

25. That relations up to the seventh degree be not married, nor, if they are already married, should they continue to live together; and if anyone be aware of this incest and not declare it, let him know that he is a party to the same guilt.

26. That the bodies of the dead are not to be carried outside their parish for burial, lest the priest of the parish lose his just fee from the burial.

27. That none out of a rash desire for novelty venerate the bodies of the dead, or springs, or anything else, as we have known to be done, without permission from the bishop.

28. That none henceforth presume to practice that wicked trade through which men in England were customarily sold like brute beasts.

29. Those who commit sodomy, and those willingly aiding them in this, were in the same synod condemned with strict anathema, until by penance and confession they might merit absolution. And as for a man detected in this crime, it was ordained that, if he be a member of a religious order, he be promoted to no higher rank, and be deposed from any rank he has; but if a layman, that he be deprived of his lawful condition in the realm of England. . . .

Questions: How do the Norman reformers wish to change the Anglo-Saxon Church and its clergy? Judging from this text, how distinct were the pre-Conquest clergy from the laity, in terms of their appearance, behavior, and domestic arrangements? Which of these reforms do you think would be hardest to enforce, and why?

28. Henry I's Coronation Charter

To help secure his slightly shaky claim to the throne by enlisting the good will of barons and Church, Henry I (r. 1100–35) issued at the time of his coronation a document often known as the Charter of Liberties. Capitalizing on the unpopularity in church circles of his brother and predecessor, William II (r. 1087–1100), Henry promised to abandon William's high-handed practices and be in every way a good king by following the good customs of the past. The Coronation Charter was not innovative in its content, but it established a tradition for Henry's successors, who found that they were expected to issue similar documents when they took the throne, and eventually it was one of the precedents contributing to Magna Carta.

Source: trans. G.C. Lee, *Source-Book of English History: Leading Documents* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1900), pp. 125–27; revised.

In the year of the incarnation of the Lord 1101, Henry, son of King William, after the death of his brother William, by the grace of God, king of the English, to all faithful, greeting:

1. Know that by the mercy of God, and by the common counsel of the barons of the whole kingdom of England, I have been crowned king of the same kingdom; and because the kingdom has been oppressed by unjust exactions, I, from regard for God, and from the love which I have toward you, first make the holy Church of God free, so that I will neither sell nor rent, nor, when archbishop, or bishop, or abbot is dead, will I take anything from the domain of the Church, or from its men, until a successor is installed in that office. And I will take away all the evil customs by which the realm of England was unjustly oppressed, which evil customs I partly set down here.

2. If any of my barons, earls, or others who hold [land] from me shall have died, his heir shall not redeem his land as he did in the time of my brother, but shall relieve it by a just and legitimate relief [payment]. Similarly also the men of my barons shall relieve their lands from their lords by a just and legitimate relief.

3. And if any one of the barons or other men of mine wishes to give his daughter in marriage, or his sister or niece or relation, he must speak with me about it, but I will neither take anything from him for this permission, nor forbid him to give her in marriage, unless he wishes to marry her to my enemy. And if, when a baron or other man of mine is dead, a daughter remains

as his heir, I will give her in marriage according to the judgment of my barons, along with her land. And if a wife outlives her husband, and is without children, she shall have her dowry and right of marriage, and I will not give her to a husband except according to her will.

4. And if a wife has survived with children, she shall have her dowry and right of marriage, so long as she shall have kept her body legitimately, and I will not give her in marriage, except according to her will. And the guardian of the land and children shall be either the wife or another one of the relatives as shall seem to be most just. And I require my barons to deal similarly with the sons and daughters or wives of their men.

5. The common tax on money which used to be taken through the cities and counties, which was not taken in the time of King Edward, I now forbid altogether henceforth to be taken. If anyone shall have been seized, whether a moneyer or any other, with false money, strict justice shall be done for it.

6. All fines and debts which were owed to my brother, I remit, except my rightful rents, and except those payments which had been agreed upon for the inheritances of others or for those things which more justly affected others. And if anyone for his own inheritance has stipulated anything, this I remit, and all reliefs which had been agreed upon for rightful inheritances.

7. And if any one of my barons or men shall become feeble, however he himself shall give or arrange to give his money, I grant that it shall be so given. Moreover, if he himself, prevented by arms, or by weakness, shall not have bestowed his money, or arranged to bestow it, his wife, or his children or his parents, and his legitimate men shall divide it for his soul, as shall seem best to them.

8. If any of my barons or men shall have committed an offense he shall not give security to the extent of forfeiture of his money, as he did in the time of my father or my brother, but shall pay according to the measure of the offense, as he would have paid in the time of my father and before, in the time of my other predecessors; so that if he shall have been convicted of treachery or of another crime, he shall pay as is just.

9. Moreover, all murders done before that day on which I was crowned king, I pardon; and those which shall be done henceforth shall be punished justly according to the law of King

Edward [the Confessor].

10. By the common agreement of my barons, I have retained the forests in my own hand, as my father held them.
11. To those knights who hold their land by military service, I yield of my own gift the lands of their demesne plows free from all payments and from all labor, so that as they have thus been favored by such a great alleviation, so they may readily provide themselves with horses and arms for my service and for the defense of my kingdom.
12. I establish a firm peace in my whole kingdom and require it to be kept henceforth.
13. The law of King Edward [the Confessor] I give to you again with those changes with which my father changed it by the counsel of his barons.
14. If anyone has taken anything from my possessions since the death of King William [II], my brother, or from the possessions of anyone, let the whole of it be immediately returned without alteration, and if anyone shall have retained anything of it, he who is found [in possession of the stolen property] will pay it heavily to me. Witnesses Maurice, bishop of London, and Gundulf, bishop, and William, bishop-elect, and Henry, earl, and Simon, earl, and Walter Giffard, and Robert de Montfort, and Roger Bigod, and Henry de Port, at London, when I was crowned.

Questions: What message is the king trying to send with this document? Why does he refer several times to King Edward the Confessor? What are the main areas of tension between the king and the Church? Between the king and his barons?

29. Eadmer's Account of Queen Edith-Matilda

Another of Henry I's moves to strengthen his hand at the beginning of his reign was his marriage to Edith, a Scottish princess as well as a descendant of the Anglo-Saxon royal house of Wessex. But there was a problem: Edith had spent most of her life in monasteries, and some believed her to be a nun. After a council of bishops convened by Archbishop Anselm ruled that Edith was free to marry, she became Henry's wife and changed her name to the Norman "Matilda." The following account of the matter was written by the monk Eadmer, a close associate of Archbishop Anselm, who was

keenly aware of the scandal that had attended the marriage.

Source: trans. G. Bosanquet, *Eadmer's History of Recent Events in England: Historia novorum in Anglia* (London: Cresset Press, 1964), pp. 126–31.

A few days after this Matilda, the daughter of Malcolm, most noble king of the Scots and of Margaret, who is known to have been descended from the old kings of the English, married this Henry [I], king of England. Now Margaret herself was a daughter of Edward, son of King Edmund, who was a son of King Æthelred, son of that glorious King Edgar mentioned at the very beginning of this work. Although the matter of this union has, as some may perhaps think, no bearing on the intended purpose of this work, yet, as it was handled by Anselm, for he both married them with his blessing and also consecrated her as queen, I think I ought briefly to describe how this came about. I am particularly anxious to do this because quite a large number of people have maligned Anselm, saying, as we have ourselves heard them do, that in this matter he did not keep to the path of strict right. Now it is true that this Matilda was brought up from early childhood in a convent of nuns and grew up there to womanhood, and many believed that she had been dedicated by her parents to God's service, as she had been seen walking abroad wearing the veil like the nuns with whom she was living. This circumstance, when, long after she had discarded the veil, the king fell in love with her, set the tongues of very many wagging and held back the two from embracing one another as they desired. Accordingly, as all were looking for a sign from Anselm on this question, the girl herself went to him and humbly besought his advice and help in the matter. He, alluding to the rumor which was going about, declared that he was not to be induced by any pleading to take from God his bride and join her in marriage to an earthly husband. She replied denying absolutely that she had been so dedicated. She denied too that she had ever at any time been veiled with her own consent and declared that, if it was necessary to convince him, she would prove it at the judgment seat of the whole English Church. "But, that I did wear the veil," she said, "I do not deny. For, when I was quite a young girl and went in fear of the rod of my Aunt Christina [the abbess of Romsey], whom you knew quite well, to preserve me from the lust of the Normans which was rampant and at that time ready to assault any woman's honor, used to put a little black hood on my head and, when I threw it off, she would often make me smart with a good slapping and most horrible scolding, as well as treating me as being in disgrace. That hood I did indeed wear in her presence, chafing at it and fearful; but, as soon as I was able to escape out of her sight, I tore it off and threw it on the ground and trampled on it and in that way, although foolishly, I used to vent

my rage and the hatred of it which boiled up in me. In that way, and only in that way, I was veiled, as my conscience bears witness. And if anyone says that I was dedicated, of that too the truth may be gathered from the fact, which is known to many persons still living, that my father, when by chance he saw me veiled snatched the veil off and, tearing it in pieces, invoked the hatred of God upon the person who had put it on me, declaring that he had rather have chosen to marry me to Count Alan [i.e., Alan Rufus, lord of Richmond and companion of William I] than consign me to a house of nuns. That is my answer to the slanders which are spread abroad about me. This I ask your Wisdom to consider and to do for me as your Fatherhood knows should be done." To cut the story short, Anselm refrained from giving an immediate decision and declared that the case ought to be determined by the judgment of the chief persons of religion in the kingdom. So at his bidding on an appointed day the bishops, the abbots, and all the nobles and the leading men of the religious profession assembled in the manor of Saint Andrew of Rochester, named Lambeth, to which he himself had then come for the treatment of this question.

Fig. 28. Queen Edith-Matilda. King Henry I's queen, whose decision to leave a convent in order to marry the king is described by Eadmer, is shown here in a nineteenth-century engraving drawn from a statue in the west doorway of Rochester Cathedral.

In due order the case was brought up for discussion. From various

sources credible witnesses came forward declaring that the simple truth supported the girl's story. Besides these came two archdeacons, William of Canterbury and Hambald of Salisbury, whom Father Anselm had sent to Wilton where the girl had been brought up to make enquiries to see what was known with certainty on this matter. They declared in the hearing of the whole assembly that they had made most careful enquiries of the sisters and that they had not been able to gather from them anything at all which was inconsistent with the account given. Accordingly Anselm warned them and charged them all by their Christian duty of obedience that no one of them should let favor or fear pervert his judgment but that each one, realizing that it was indeed God's cause, should to the best of his ability give help to secure that the matter should be rightly decided, "lest," he said, "and God forbid that it should be so, there go forth a judicial sentence such that it may be a precedent in the future for either depriving anyone unfairly of his liberty or of wrongly defrauding God of what is rightly his." With acclamation they all signified that this was what should be done and promised that they would not fail to do so. The father then withdrew from the assembly by himself. This representative assembly of the Church of England then discussed the question of the decision which should be pronounced. When this had been done Anselm was reverently escorted back into the assembly and the finding upon the matter on which they were all agreed, was then declared. They said that, having looked carefully into the matter, it seemed to them established, and of this they stated they were prepared to provide proof, that under the circumstances of her case the girl could not rightly be bound by any decision to prevent her being free to dispose of her person in whatever way she legally wished to do so. "Although," they said, "we should have no difficulty in proving this by simple reasoning, yet, since this is unnecessary, we refrain from doing so, holding as we do that more reliable than any reasons of ours is a like decision pronounced in a similar case by your predecessor of revered memory, our father and master, Lanfranc. When the great Duke William first conquered this land, many of his men, pluming themselves on so great a victory and considering that everything ought to yield and submit to their wishes and lusts, began to do violence not only to the possessions of the conquered but also, where opportunity offered, to their women, married and unmarried alike, with shameful licentiousness. Thereupon a number of women, anticipating this and fearing for their own virtue, took themselves off to convents of sisters and, by taking the veil, protected themselves in their company from such infamy. Thus, when after a time this violence had quieted down and, considering the nature of the times, comparative peace had been restored in the land,

Father Lanfranc was asked what view he took of the treatment of those who had safeguarded their chastity by taking such refuge, that is, whether or not they should be bound to remain in the convent and keep the veil which they had taken. This question he resolved with the advice of a general council, by giving judgment that to those women who had by their conduct so clearly testified their devotion to virtue should be accorded the honor due to them for their chastity rather than that they should be forced to keep to the life of the convent, unless they chose it of their own free will." The speakers added: "We took part in these proceedings and have also heard this judgment approved by men of wisdom. We are anxious that this decision should hold good in the present case and ask that it be confirmed." . . .

Then Anselm, referring to these findings, said: "You know the warning and the charge which I gave you and the promise that you made. Seeing, then, that you have unanimously given judgment as seemed to you to be most just, as you assure me you have, I do not reject your judgment. I accept it with all the more confidence, as I am told that it is supported by the authority of so great a father." Then the girl was brought into the assembly. Calmly she heard and appreciated what had taken place and petitioned that she be given audience to make a brief statement. Then, speaking aloud, she offered to prove by oath or by any other process of ecclesiastical law that her story as already described was in accordance with the real truth of the matter. This she declared that she would do, not thinking that they did not believe her, but to remove any opportunity for ill-affected persons to utter any scandal in the future. They replied that there was no need for any such thing, since, if an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brought forth evil things, he would immediately be silenced, as the truth had been proved and established by the consensus of opinion of so many persons of position. After this, having obtained an interview with Anselm and his blessing, she departed and a few days later became, as I have said, wife and queen.

Questions: What is the author's purpose in recounting this story? What does Edith-Matilda's testimony tell us of conditions immediately after the Norman Conquest? What was her adolescence like, and how did she escape from that world? What does the story reveal about attitudes toward the monastic life and toward marriage? What were the concerns of the investigators?

30. The Founding of the Gilbertine Order

The twelfth century was a period of reform and spiritual renewal, characterized by new models of religious life modeled

on the life of Christ and the apostles. In England, as on the continent, women were actively engaged in religious reform; in fact, the century saw the most rapid proliferation of nunneries in English history. The only native English religious order, the Gilbertines, was founded by Gilbert of Sempringham, a Norman knight's son-turned-priest and charismatic preacher. The order's first members were women who sought to live as nuns under Gilbert's direction at Sempringham in Lincolnshire; later, Gilbert appointed lay-sisters to serve the nuns, then lay-brothers to do the manual labor necessary for the community to be self-sufficient, and finally canons (priests who lived in community under a rule) to serve the spiritual and administrative needs of his order, which continued to expand. The following account of the order's foundation was written in the early thirteenth century, by which time expansion had come to a halt and scandals—most infamously, an episode in which a nun was impregnated by a lay-brother at the priory of Watton—threatened the reputation of the Gilbertines.

Source: trans. R. Foreville and G. Keir, *The Book of St Gilbert* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49.

At that time, when Henry I reigned in England . . . there were in the village of Sempringham some girls living a secular life; their minds had received the seed of God's word, which he had constantly supplied to them, and, with the help of moisture and warmth, they grew until white and ready to harvest. Wishing to overcome the temptations of their sex and of the world, these girls longed to cling without hindrance to a heavenly bridegroom. Holy Gilbert, filled with God's charity, had arranged to devote to his service the churches of Sempringham and West Torrington . . . and to distribute his own possessions to the needy. When he found no men willing to lead such strict lives for God's sake, Gilbert thought it right to make over everything he owned to the use of such girls as, being truly poor in spirit, could obtain the kingdom of heaven for themselves and for others. . . . From their number he consecrated seven virgins aflame with desire for heaven as temples to the sevenfold spirit, so that if adorned by virtue their virginity might win merit. . . . And since to obtain salvation it is not enough to desist from evil unless this is followed by the performance of good works, he dictated for them and taught them the law of holiness, by which they might please their heavenly bridegroom and, when they had become beloved, always remain in his chaste embrace. He gave them instructions concerning their life and discipline, urging and ordering them to preserve chastity, humility, obedience, charity, and the other rules of life, all of

which they willingly accepted and devoutly kept.

In the minds of these women there gleamed the image of a valuable pearl, which they bought, giving themselves and their possessions for it. Further, although they lived in the flesh, their life transcended it; but because they did live in the flesh and could not exist outside it, he made available for their use all that the condition of fleshly need requires in the form of food, clothing, shelter, and the other necessities of life according to the degree judged right by his prudence. In this way dwellings suitable for the religious life were duly built, together with an enclosure sealed on every side. Then, with the aid and counsel of the venerable bishop Alexander, he enclosed the handmaidens of Christ to live a solitary life under the wall on the northern side of the church of Saint Andrew the Apostle in the village of Sempringham. Only a window was preserved which could be opened so that necessaries could be passed in through it. They lived in the world but he sought to set them apart from it. . . . And as the women were not allowed to go out anywhere, even to perform or obtain necessities, he appointed to their service some poor girls, who served them dressed in secular attire; they were to transfer whatever had to be given or received through the window in a proper fashion. He had left this single opening to be used only at a suitable time; in fact, he would have fastened it permanently if human beings could live without human things. There was a door, but it was never unlocked except by his command, and it was not for the women to go out but for him to go in to them when necessary. He himself was the keeper of this door and its key. For wherever he went and wherever he stayed, like an ardent and jealous lover he carried with him the key to that door as the seal of their purity.

Further, he took care that no trouble from outside should break in upon the peace and quiet of these women, because he learned from wise religious men that it is not safe for young girls in secular life who wander about everywhere to serve those in religious orders. Since evil conversation destroys good behavior, he was anxious that they should not report or perform any worldly deed which might offend the nuns' minds. And so, on the persuasion and advice of such men, it came about that these serving women asked, along with the life of religion, for a habit to be granted to them in which they could minister to the handmaidens of Christ, leading a poor but honorable existence. See how the grain of corn produced another shoot as it fell to the earth! When blessed Gilbert saw this, his heart was filled with joy because of their zeal for the faith. . . .

Now because women's efforts achieve little without help from men, he took on men, and put those he kept as servants about his house and on his land in charge of the nuns' external and more

arduous tasks; some of them he had raised from childhood at his own expense, others were fugitives from their masters, freed in the name of religion, and others again were destitute beggars. For he was the true servant of the Gospels who, following his Lord's command, went out into the streets and open spaces of the city and forced all those that he found poor, weak, blind, and lame, to enter, that the Lord's house might be filled. Because all these men, spurred both by the poverty of their human life and by their longing for the life of heaven, wanted exactly what the lay sisters desired and requested, he took the same course of action in their case as in the women's, and finally bestowed the habit upon both in token of humility and renunciation of the world. He imposed on them many heavy tasks and a few light ones, which we have recorded above, as well as spiritual qualities like humility, obedience, and patience and the like, which are difficult to perform but are greatly rewarded; all these they accepted most willingly and promised under oath to observe.

[After seeking unsuccessfully to have the Cistercian order take over the leadership of his religious houses, Gilbert recruited canons to serve the order's spiritual needs.] And so he was instructed by what we should properly consider a divine destiny and forced by this crisis to summon men to share pastoral care who were educated and distinguished by ecclesiastical orders; these he set to govern all those he had gathered together. He chose men for their ability, scholars for their skill in ruling others, clerks in order to exercise authority over the Church in accordance with law; men to look after women, scholars to open the way of salvation to both men and women, and clerks to supply the pastoral office to all. This he did observing God's will and the counsel of holy and prudent men, for as is laid down in the decrees of the fathers it is essential that communities of maidens be controlled through the support and administration of monks and clerks. For it is beneficial for virgins who have given themselves to Christ if spiritual fathers are chosen for them so that they may not only be protected under their direction but also be fortified by their teaching.

The sacred canons of the Church declare that monks and clerks must not live in the company of women, but apart from all contact with them; nor should they commonly receive permission to approach even as far as their threshold. For this reason, Master Gilbert, than whom no one ever labored more strenuously in the cause of chastity, observed this ruling. He ordered dwellings for the clerks to be established far away from the houses of nuns, as if there were in one village or one city various households of religious, so that the canons lived a long way distant from the women and had no access to them except for administering some divine sacrament when there were

many witnesses present. Only the church where divine service is celebrated is common to all, but then only for the solemn rite of the mass, once or twice a day, and there is a wall which blocks it throughout so that the men cannot be seen or the women heard. For the canons have an oratory of their own in which they perform the divine offices. But whenever a very pressing reason forces them to enter the nuns' quarters, no one, not even the priest who attends them all, is allowed to go in to visit them unless observed by several companions. Yet even then the nuns who are speaking can be heard, but in no circumstances can they be seen with uncovered faces by any man. If any message from outside needs to be given inside, or any from inside without, four persons are appointed especially to do this: from outside two older men, of known integrity, and from within two of the older sisters. Everything necessary is passed on by these four, who may only hear and not see one another.

When all these arrangements had been made and he had called them all, both men and women, into the unity of fellowship and the bond of peace, that through and in the One he might lead them all to the One, then he made from the multitude one heart and one soul in God.

Questions: What ideals inspired Gilbert and his earliest followers? What practical problems did they face? Why was it deemed necessary to separate men and women within Gilbertine communities? How would you characterize the author's view of women's spirituality?

31. William of Malmesbury on the Civil War between Stephen and Matilda

Although he had literally dozens of illegitimate children, Henry I left no legitimate son, and after his death his daughter and heir Matilda was shouldered aside by her cousin Stephen (r. 1135–54), against whom she then waged a lengthy civil war. The following account, by one of twelfth-century England's finest chroniclers, was dedicated to Matilda's illegitimate half-brother Robert, earl of Gloucester, who emerges as the hero in this version. This excerpt covers the period in which Matilda came closest to deposing Stephen and becoming England's first queen regnant. Matilda is known as "the empress" because her first marriage was to the German emperor; after his death, she married Count Geoffrey of Anjou.

Source: trans. J.A. Giles, *William of Malmesbury's Chronicle of the Kings of England, from the Earliest Period to the Reign of King Stephen* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1847), pp. 481–83, 490–93,

498, 505–7, 509–11, 515–25; revised.

In the twenty-seventh year of his reign, in the month of September, King Henry [I] came to England, bringing his daughter [the empress Matilda] with him. But, at the ensuing Christmas, convening a great number of the clergy and nobility at London, . . . he turned his thoughts to a successor to the kingdom. On which subject, having held much previous and long-continued deliberation, he now at this council compelled all the nobility of England, as well as the bishops and abbots, to take an oath that, if he should die without male issue, they would accept his daughter Matilda, the former empress, as their sovereign without delay or hesitation, observing how, prejudicially to the country, fate had snatched away his son William, to whom the kingdom had pertained by right, and that his daughter still survived, to whom alone the legitimate succession belonged, from her grandfather, uncle, and father, who had been kings, as well as from her maternal descent for many ages back. . . . All those persons of any note in this council therefore took the oath: first of all William, archbishop of Canterbury, followed by the other bishops and the abbots. The first of the laity who swore was David, king of Scotland, uncle of the empress, followed by Stephen, earl of Moreton and Boulogne, nephew of King Henry by his sister Adela, then Robert, the king's [illegitimate] son, who was born to him before he came to the throne, and whom he had created earl of Gloucester, bestowing on him in marriage Mabel, a noble and excellent woman, a lady devoted to her husband, and blessed by numerous and beautiful offspring. There was a singular dispute, as they relate, between Robert and Stephen, who contended with rival virtue about which of them should take the oath first, with one alleging the privilege of a son, the other the dignity of a nephew. . . .

[After King Henry's death in 1135,] Stephen, earl of Mortain and Boulogne, nephew of King Henry, as I have before said, who, after the king of Scotland, was the first layman who had sworn fidelity to the empress, hastened his return into England by Whitsand. The empress, from certain causes, as well as her brother, Robert, earl of Gloucester, and almost all the nobility, delayed returning to the kingdom. However, some castles in Normandy, the principal of which was Domfront, espoused the party of the heiress. Moreover, it is well known that on the day on which Stephen disembarked in England there was, very early in the morning, contrary to the nature of winter in these countries, a terrible peal of thunder and most dreadful lightning, so that the world seemed well-nigh about to be destroyed. He was received, however, as king, by the people of London and of Winchester, and also won over Roger, bishop of Salisbury, and

William Pont de l'Arche, the keepers of the royal treasures. Yet, not to conceal the truth from posterity, all his attempts would have been vain had not his brother, Henry, bishop of Winchester, who is now legate of the papal see in England, granted him his entire support, allured indeed by the fullest expectation that Stephen would follow the example of his grandfather William [I] in the management of the kingdom, and more especially in the strictness of ecclesiastical discipline. In consequence, when Stephen was bound by the rigorous oath which William, archbishop of Canterbury required from him, concerning restoring and preserving the liberty of the Church, the bishop of Winchester became his pledge and surety. . . .

Stephen, therefore, was crowned king of England on Sunday [22 December,] the eleventh before the kalends of January, the twenty-second day after the decease of his uncle, the year of our Lord 1135, in the presence of three bishops, that is, the archbishop, and the bishops of Winchester and Salisbury; but there were no abbots, and scarcely any of the nobility present. He was a man of activity, but imprudent, strenuous in war, of great mind in attempting works of difficulty, mild and compassionate to his enemies, and affable to all. He was kind, as far as promises went, but sure to disappoint in their truth and execution. Whence he soon afterward neglected the advice of his brother, by whose assistance, as I have said, he had supplanted his adversaries and obtained the kingdom. . . .

After Easter in the same year, Robert, earl of Gloucester, of whose prudence Stephen chiefly stood in awe, came to England. While he was yet resident in Normandy, he had most earnestly considered what line of conduct he should determine upon in the present state of affairs. If he became subject to Stephen, it seemed contrary to the oath he had sworn to his sister; if he opposed him, he saw that he could not benefit her nor his nephews, though he must grievously injure himself. For the king, as I said before, had an immense treasure, which his uncle had been accumulating for many years. His coin, and that of the best quality, was estimated at £100,000; besides which there were vessels of gold and silver, of great weight and inestimable value, collected by the magnificence of preceding kings, and chiefly by Henry. A man possessed of such boundless treasures could not lack supporters, more especially as he was profuse, and, what by no means becomes a prince, even prodigal. . . . Stephen, indeed, before he came to the throne, from his complacency of manners, and readiness to joke and sit and regale, even with low people, had gained so much of their affection as can hardly be conceived, and already all the nobility of England had willingly acknowledged him. The most prudent earl, therefore, was extremely anxious to convince them of their misconduct, and recall them to wiser sentiments by his presence, for

he was unable to oppose Stephen's power, from the causes aforesaid; indeed he was not free to come to England unless, appealing as a partaker of their revolt, he concealed his secret intentions for a time. He did homage to the king, therefore, on the condition that he should preserve his rank entire, and maintain his engagements to him, for having long since scrutinized Stephen's disposition, he foresaw the instability of his faith. . . .

In the year 1139, the venom of malice long nurtured in Steven's breast finally burst forth openly. Rumors were prevalent in England that Earl Robert was on the very eve of coming from Normandy with his sister; and when, under such an expectation, many persons revolted against the king, not only in inclination but in deed, he avenged himself for this injury at the cost of numbers. He also, contrary to the royal character, seized many nobles at court, through mere suspicion of hostility to him, and obliged them to surrender their castles, and accede to any conditions he prescribed. . . .

[In late September of that year,] Earl Robert, having at length surmounted every cause of delay, arrived with the empress his sister in England, relying on the protection of God and the observance of his lawful oath, but with a much smaller military force than any other person would have required for so perilous an enterprise; for he had with him no more than one hundred and forty horsemen . . . [and] proceeded through the hostile country to Bristol accompanied, as I have heard, by scarcely twelve horsemen, and was joined in the midst of his journey by Brian Fitz-Count of Wallingford. . . . [He] committed the empress to Henry, bishop of Winchester and Waleran, count of Meulan for safe conduct, a favor never denied to the most inveterate enemy by honorable soldiers. Waleran, indeed, declined to go further than Calne, but the bishop continued his route. The earl, therefore, quickly collecting his troops, came to the boundary appointed by the king, and placed his sister in safe quarters at Bristol. She was afterward received into Gloucester by Miles, who held the castle of that city under the earl in the time of King Henry, doing him homage and swearing fidelity to him; for this is the chief city of his county. . . .

The whole country then around Gloucester to the extremity of Wales, partly by force, and partly by favor, gradually joined the party of their sovereign the empress during the remaining months of that year. The owners of certain castles, securing themselves within their strong walls, awaited the outcome of events. The city of Hereford was taken without difficulty, and a few soldiers, who, determined on resistance, had thrown themselves into the castle, were besieged. The king drew near to devise means for their assistance, if possible; but frustrated in his wishes, he retired with disgrace. He also approached Bristol, and going beyond it, burnt the neighborhood around

Dunstore, leaving nothing, as far as he was able, which could furnish food to his enemies, or advantage to anyone. . . .

The whole of this year [1140] was embittered by the horrors of war. There were many castles throughout England, each defending its own neighborhood, but, more properly speaking, laying it waste. The garrisons drove off from the fields both sheep and cattle, nor did they abstain either from pillaging churches or churchyards. Seizing those country people who were said to be possessed of money, they compelled them, by extreme torture, to promise whatever they thought fit. Plundering the houses of the wretched husbandmen, even to their very beds, they cast them into prison; nor did they liberate them until after they had given all they possessed or could scrape together any means for their release. Many calmly expired in the midst of torments inflicted to compel them to ransom themselves, bewailing their miseries to God (which was all they could do). And, indeed, at the instance of the earl, the legate, with the bishops, repeatedly excommunicated all violators of churchyards and plunderers of churches, and those who laid violent hands on men in holy or monastic orders, or their servants, but this profited them little. It was distressing, therefore, to see England, once the fondest cherisher of peace and the receptacle of tranquility, reduced to such a pitch of misery that not even the bishops, nor monks, could pass in safety from one town to another. Under King Henry, many foreigners, who had been driven from home by the commotions of their native land, were accustomed to resort to England, and rest in quiet under his fostering protection: in Stephen's time, numbers of free-booters from Flanders and Brittany flocked to England in expectation of rich pillage. Meanwhile, the earl of Gloucester conducted himself cautiously, and focused his efforts on making conquests with the smallest possible loss to his supporters. He thought it enough to restrain those English nobles who disregarded their oath [to the empress]; this way, even if they did not assist [the empress's] cause, they would not harm it. . . . But when he saw the opportunity present itself, he strenuously performed the duty both of soldier and of general; more especially, he valiantly subdued those strongholds which did great damage to his cause; that is to say, Harptree, which King Stephen had taken from certain soldiers of the earl before he came to England, and many others: Sudley, Cerney, which the king had garrisoned, as I have said, and the castle which Stephen had fortified over against Wallingford, he leveled to the ground. He also, in these difficult times, made his brother Reginald earl of Cornwall. Nor indeed did the king show less spirit in performing the duties of his station, for he omitted no occasion of repeatedly beating off his adversaries, and defending his own possessions. But he failed to

succeed, and all things declined for lack of justice. Dearth of provisions, too, increased by degrees, and the scarcity of good money was so great, from its being counterfeited, that sometimes out of ten or more shillings hardly a dozen pence would be received. The king himself was reported to have ordered the weight of the penny, as established in King Henry's time, to be reduced because, having exhausted the vast treasures of his predecessor, he was unable to provide for the expense of so many soldiers. All things, then, became venal in England, and churches and abbeys were put up for sale, no longer secretly but even publicly. . . .

At length, on [2 February,] the day of the Purification of the blessed Mary, [the earl of Gloucester and his army] arrived [in Lincolnshire] at the river flowing between the two armies, called the Trent, which, from its springs, together with floods of rain, had risen so high that it could not possibly be forded. Here, at last, disclosing his intentions to his son-in-law, who had joined him with a strong force, and to those he had brought with him, he added that he had long since made up his mind never to be induced to flee, whatever might happen; if they could not conquer, they must die or be taken. All encouraged him to hope the best; and, wonderful to hear, though on the eve of hazarding a battle, he swam across the rapid river I have mentioned, with the whole of his party. So great was the earl's ardor to put an end to calamity that he preferred risking extremities to prolonging the sufferings of the country. The king, too, with many earls and an active body of cavalry, abandoned the siege and courageously presented himself for battle. The royalists began the prelude to the fight, which they call the 'joust,' as they were skilled in that exercise, but when they saw that the earl's party, if it may be so called, did not attack from a distance with lances, but at close quarters with swords, and broke the king's ranks with violent and determined onset, all six of the [king's] earls, together with the king, attempted to ensure their safety by flight. A few barons, of laudable fidelity and valor, who would not desert him, even in his necessity, were taken captive. The king, though he by no means lacked the spirit to defend himself, being at last attacked on every side by the earl of Gloucester's soldiers, fell to the ground by a blow from a stone (but who was the author of this deed is uncertain). Thus, when all around him were either taken or dispersed, he was compelled to yield to circumstances and become a captive. The truly noble earl of Gloucester commanded the king to be preserved uninjured, nor suffered him to be molested even with a reproach; the person whom he had just before fiercely attacked when dignified with the sovereignty, he now calmly protected when subdued, so that now that the tumults of anger and of joy were quieted he might show kindness to his kinsman, and respect

the dignity of the captive's diadem. The citizens of Lincoln were slaughtered on all sides by the just indignation of the victors. . . .

The king, according to the custom of captives, was presented to the empress at Gloucester by her brother, and afterward conducted to Bristol. Here, at first, he was kept with every mark of honor, except the liberty of going at large: but later, through the presumption of certain persons, who said openly and falsely that it did not become the earl to treat the king otherwise than they chose, and also because it was reported that having either eluded or bribed his keepers, he had been found, more than once, beyond the appointed limits, more especially in the night-time, he was confined with fetters.

In the meanwhile, both the empress and the earl dealt by messengers with the legate his [King Stephen's] brother, that he should forthwith receive her [as queen] into the Church, and to the kingdom, as the daughter of King Henry, to whom all England and Normandy had sworn allegiance. . . . By means of negotiators on either side, the business was so far advanced that they agreed to meet in conference on an open plain on this side of Winchester. They assembled therefore on the third Sunday in Lent [2 March], a day dark and rainy, as though the fates would portend a woeful change in this affair. The empress swore, and pledged her faith to the bishop, that all matters of importance in England, and especially the bestowing of bishoprics and abbeys, should await his decision, if he, with the holy Church, would receive her as sovereign and observe perpetual fidelity toward her. Her brother Robert, earl of Gloucester, swore as she did, and pledged his faith to her, as did also Brian fitzCount, marcher lord of Wallingford, and Miles of Gloucester, afterward earl of Hereford, with some others. Nor did the bishop hesitate to receive the empress as sovereign of England, and, together with certain of his party, to pledge his faith that, so long as she did not infringe the covenant, he would observe his fidelity to her. On the morrow, which was the fifth before the nones of March [3 March], a splendid procession being formed, she was received in the cathedral of Winchester, with the bishop-legate conducting her on the right side, and Bernard, bishop of Saint David, on the left. There were present also Alexander, bishop of Lincoln, Robert of Hereford, Nigel of Ely, Robert of Bath, the abbots Ingulf of Abingdon, Edward of Reading, Peter of Malmesbury, Gilbert of Gloucester, Roger of Tewkesbury, and some others. In a few days, Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, came to the empress at Winchester, by invitation of the legate, but he deferred promising fidelity to her, deeming it beneath his reputation and character to change sides until he had consulted the king. In consequence, he and many other prelates, along with some few of the laity, were allowed to visit Stephen and converse with him; then,

graciously obtaining leave to submit to the exigency of the times, they embraced the sentiments of the legate. The empress passed Easter, which happened on [30 March,] the third before the kalends of April, at Oxford; the rest returned to their respective homes.

On [8 April,] the day after the octave of Easter, a council was opened with great fanfare at Winchester, consisting of Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, all the bishops of England, and many abbots, and with the legate presiding. Such as were absent accounted for it by messengers and letters. As I was present at the holding of this council, I will not deny to posterity the truth of every circumstance; for I perfectly remember it. On the same day, . . . the legate called the bishops apart, and discoursed with them in secret of his design; then the abbots and, lastly, the archdeacons were summoned. Of his intention nothing transpired publicly, though what was to be done engrossed the minds and conversation of all. . . .

On the fourth day of the week the Londoners came: and being introduced to the council, urged their cause, so far as to say that they were sent from the fraternity, as they call it, of London, not to contend but to entreat that their lord the king might be liberated from captivity. . . . The legate answered them copiously and clearly and, so that their request might be the less complied with, repeated his speech of the preceding day [in favor of making the empress queen], adding that it did not become the Londoners, who were considered as the chief people of England, in the light of nobles, to side with those persons who had deserted their lord in battle, by whose advice the king had dishonored the holy Church, and who, in fact, only appeared to favor the Londoners in order to drain them of their money.

In the meantime, a certain person, whose name, if I rightly remember, was Christian, a clerk belonging to the queen [Matilda of Boulogne, Stephen's wife], as I heard, rose up, and . . . read [a] letter in their hearing: of which this was the purport. "The queen earnestly entreated the whole clergy assembled, and especially the bishop of Winchester, the brother of her lord, to restore the said lord to his kingdom, whom abandoned persons, and even such as were under homage to him, had cast into chains." To this suggestion, the legate answered to the same effect as to the Londoners. . . .

It was now a work of great difficulty to soothe the minds of the Londoners: for though these matters, as I have said, were agitated immediately after Easter, yet it was only a few days before the nativity of Saint John [24 June] that they would receive the empress. At that time a great part of England readily submitted to her government. . . . The lord legate, too, appeared of laudable fidelity in furthering the interests of the empress. But, behold, at the very moment when she imagined she should get possession of all England, everything was

changed. The Londoners, ever suspicious and murmuring among themselves, now burst out into open expressions of hatred, and, as it is reported, even laid in wait for their sovereign and her nobles. Aware of and escaping this plot, they gradually retired from the city, without tumult and in a certain military order. . . . The Londoners, learning of their departure, rushed to their residence and plundered everything which they had left in their haste.

Not many days after, a misunderstanding arose between the legate [Henry, bishop of Winchester and King Stephen's brother] and the empress which may be justly considered as the melancholy cause of every subsequent evil in England. . . . Offended at [her refusal to take his advice], he [the legate] kept away from her court for many days, and though he was repeatedly sent for, persisted in refusing to go there. Meanwhile, he held a friendly conference with the queen, his brother's wife, at Guildford, and being wrought upon by her tears and concessions, bent his mind to the liberation of Stephen. He also [spoke against the empress:] that she wished to seize his person; that she observed nothing which she had sworn to him; and that all the barons of England had performed their engagements toward her, but that she had violated hers, as she knew not how to use her prosperity with moderation.

To allay, if possible, these commotions, the earl of Gloucester, with a retinue not very numerous, proceeded to Winchester, but, failing in his endeavors, he returned to Oxford, where his sister had for some time established her residence. She, therefore, understanding, both from what she was continually hearing and from what she then learned from her brother, that the legate had no friendly dispositions toward her, proceeded to Winchester with such forces as she could muster. . . . [Meanwhile the legate] sent for all whom he knew were well-disposed to the king. In consequence, almost all the earls of England came, for they were full of youth and levity, and preferred military enterprise to peace. Besides, many of them were ashamed at having deserted the king in battle, as has been said before, and thought to wipe off the ignominy of flight by attending this meeting. Few, however, attended the empress . . . [and] the roads on every side of Winchester were watched by [King Stephen's] queen and the earls who had come with her, lest supplies should be brought in to those who had sworn fidelity to the empress. The town of Andover also was burned. On the west, therefore, necessities were procured but scantily and with difficulty, . . . as the Londoners were lending every possible assistance [to the legate], and omitting no circumstance which might distress [the empress]. The people of Winchester were, albeit secretly, inclined to her side, regarding the faith they had before pledged to her, although they had been in some degree compelled by the bishop

to such a measure. Meanwhile combustibles were hurled from the bishop's castle on the houses of the townspeople (who, as I have said, rather wished success to the empress than to the bishop), which caught fire and burned the whole abbey of nuns within the city, and the monastery called Hyde. . . . The abbey of nuns at Wherwell was also burned by one William de Ypres, an abandoned character who feared neither God nor man, because some of the partisans of the empress had secured themselves within it.

In the meantime, the earl of Gloucester, though suffering with his followers in daily contests with the royalists, and though circumstances turned out far beneath his expectations, yet ever abstained from the burning of churches. . . . But unable to endure any longer the disgrace of being almost besieged with his party, and seeing fortune inclining toward the enemy, he deemed it expedient to yield to necessity, and so he marshaled his troop and prepared to depart. Sending his sister, therefore, and the rest, in the vanguard, that she might proceed without interruption, he himself retreated gradually with a chosen few who had spirit enough not to be alarmed at a multitude. The earls immediately pursuing him, as he thought it disgraceful, and beneath his dignity to fly, and was the chief object of universal attack, he was made captive. The rest, especially the chiefs, proceeded on their destined journey, and, with the utmost precipitation, reached Devizes. . . . [The earl] never consented to negotiate his liberation, except with the knowledge of his sister. At last the affair was thus decided: that the king and himself should be liberated on equal terms, no condition being proposed except that each might defend his party to the utmost of his abilities, as before. . . . [On the appointed] day, the king, released from his captivity, left his queen, son, and two nobles at Bristol as sureties for the liberation of the earl, and came with the utmost speed to Winchester, where the earl, now brought from Rochester, where he had first been taken, was then confined. The third day after, when the king came to Winchester, the earl departed, leaving there on that day his son William, as a pledge, until the queen should be released. Performing with quick dispatch the journey to Bristol, he liberated the queen, on whose return, William, the earl's son, was set free from his detention. It is, moreover, sufficiently well known that, although he was enticed by numberless and magnificent promises to revolt from his sister throughout his captivity and in the following months up to Christmas, yet he always deemed his fraternal affection more important than any promise which could be made him. For leaving his property and his castles, which he might have quietly enjoyed, he continued unceasingly to remain near the empress at Oxford, where, as I have said before, she held her court. . . .

Questions: What factors caused the civil war of Stephen's reign? How does the author describe the conditions of warfare? What rules of noble conduct do we see in operation here? How does the author defend the earl of Gloucester's actions? How are King Stephen and Matilda the empress depicted here? Why, when Matilda had come so close to the throne, did she lose her chance?

32. The Battle of the Standard

England's border with Scotland remained unstable through the twelfth century. In 1138, King David I of Scotland, the uncle and sworn supporter of the empress Matilda, launched three invasions of northern England with the aim of cementing his claim to Northumbria and Cumbria. The third of these invasions culminated in the English victory at the Battle of the Standard, where an English force led by local barons (many with ties on both sides of the border) confronted a significantly larger Scottish army in North Yorkshire. This account of the battle is by Richard of Hexham, a monastic chronicler writing shortly afterward.

Source: trans. A.E. Bland, *The Normans in England (1066–1154)* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), pp. 97–101; revised.

Passing by Durham with his army, the king [David I of Scotland] wasted the crops as far as the River Tees, and as was his custom broke into, plundered, and burned the towns and churches which he had earlier left untouched; then, crossing the Tees, he began to work the same havoc further afield. But the pity of God, stirred by the tears of innumerable widows, orphans and wretched men, would no longer allow him to practice such great impiety without punishment. The preparations made by the king and his men for such wickedness, their supplies, and their intended plan, did not escape the men of Yorkshire. So the barons of that county, namely, Archbishop Thurstan [of York], who, as will appear later, was a prime mover in these events, and William de Aumale, Walter de Ghent, Robert de Bruce, Roger de Mowbray, Walter Espec, Ilbert de Lacy, William de Percy, Richard de Courcy, William Fossard, Robert de Stuteville, and the other mighty and learned men, assembled at York and eagerly discussed what plan to adopt in this crisis. And since many hesitated, suspecting the treason of others and mutually distrustful, and since they had no commander and leader in war, for their lord King Stephen was then overwhelmed with equal difficulties in the south of England and could not come to them at present, and since they feared to oppose their

slight forces to such superior numbers, it seemed as if they would have to abandon the attempt to defend themselves and their country.

But Thurstan, their archbishop, a man of great persistence and worth, encouraged them with his speech and counsel. . . . He faithfully admonished them not to allow themselves through cowardice to be overthrown in a single day by the worst sort of barbarism. . . . He also promised them that he would cause the priests of his diocese to march together with them to battle, with their crosses and their parishioners, and proposed that he himself, God willing, would be present at the fight. At the same troubled season Bernard de Balliol, one of the chief men of that district, came to them from the king with a large body of knights, and both on the king's and his own behalf inflamed their hearts to the same purpose. Urged on, therefore, by the commands both of their king and their archbishop, they were all with one accord confirmed in one same purpose, and each returned to his home. Soon afterward, they all reassembled at York with their munitions and arms ready for war. When they had done penance privately, the archbishop enjoined on them a three-day fast with alms, and thereafter solemnly gave them absolution and God's and his own blessing, and though, by reason of great infirmity and the weakness of old age, he had to be carried in a litter wherever he was needed, yet he determined to go with them to arouse their courage. But they forced him to remain, beseeching him to be content to intercede for them by prayer and alms. . . . Thereupon he delivered to them his cross and the banner of Saint Peter and his own men, and the army went on to the town of Thirsk. From there they sent Robert de Brus and Bernard de Balliol as messengers to the king of Scotland, who was now wasting the land of Saint Cuthbert, as was said above. They begged the king, with the greatest deference and friendliness, to desist from such cruelty, and promised faithfully that they would ask the king of England to confer on Henry, son of the king of Scotland, the county of Northumberland, which that king had demanded. But he and his men hardened their hearts, rejected the messengers' overtures, and treated them with scornful contempt. . . . Thereupon all the chief men of that county, and William Peverel and Geoffrey Halsalin from Nottinghamshire, and Robert de Ferers from Derbyshire, and other weighty and wise men, bound and fortified themselves in turn with oaths, that none of them would desert the others in this business, so long as they could each render mutual aid, and so all would either die or conquer together. . . .

While, then, they were awaiting the coming of the Scots, the scouts whom they had sent in advance returned, reporting that the king had already crossed the River Tees with his army, and after his custom was now devastating their district. So they went to meet him in the

greatest haste, and passing through the town of Northallerton, at dawn reached a field two miles away. Immediately some of them set up the mast of a ship in the middle of a scaffold which they had brought, and called it the Standard. . . . On the top of the mast they hung a silver box containing the body of Christ, and the banners of Saint Peter the Apostle, and of Saint John of Beverley and Saint Wilfred of Ripon, confessors and bishops. They did this so that Jesus Christ our Lord, by the presence of his body, might be their leader in the war which they had undertaken for the defense of his Church and their country, at the same time thus providing that, if any of them should be by chance separated from their fellows and scattered, they would have a sure landmark by which to return to them and there find assistance. They had hardly equipped themselves with arms for the fight, when the king of Scotland was reported to be at hand with the whole of his army, ready and arrayed for battle.

Therefore a great part of the knights left their horses and became footsoldiers, and the ablest of them were arrayed with archers and set in the front rank, the rest, except the directors of the battle, being packed about the Standard in the center of the army, while the remainder of the troops were massed around them on every side in a dense rampart. The band of horsemen and the horses of the knights were withdrawn a little farther, so that they would not take fright at the noise and clamor of the Scots. In the same manner, among the enemy the king himself and almost all his men became footsoldiers and their horses were kept back toward the rear. In the forefront of the battle were the Picts, in the middle the king with his knights and Englishmen; and the rest of the barbarous horde pressed around on all sides. While they marched to battle in such order, the Standard with its banners was seen not far away, and at once the hearts of the Scottish king and his followers were struck with a mighty fear and terror. But hardened in their malice, they still strove to fulfil the evil work they had begun. So on the octave of the Assumption of Saint Mary [22 August], between the first and third hours of the day, the strife of this battle began and ended. For at the first clash innumerable Picts were slain, and the rest threw down their arms and basely took to flight. The field was choked with corpses, large numbers were captured, and the Scottish king and all the remaining troops fled. Of that great army, all were either killed or captured or scattered like sheep whose shepherd is slain, and in a wondrous way, as if gone mad, as many of them fled away from their own land into the neighboring parts of their enemies' country, as toward their native land. But wherever they were found, they were killed like sheep for slaughter. And so, by the righteous judgment of God, those who had

woefully slain and left the dead unburied were themselves more woefully cut to pieces, and found no burial after the fashion of their own or the foreigners' land, but were exposed to dogs, birds and wild beasts, or torn and dismembered, or left to decay and putrefy under the open sky. Their king, who a short time before, in his excessive pride of heart and in the magnitude of his army, seemed to have raised his head among the stars of heaven, and therefore threatened to destroy utterly the whole or the greatest part of England, was now shorn of his glory, and accompanied by only a few, and covered with the utmost shame and disgrace, scarcely escaped alive.

Questions: How did the ongoing civil war between Stephen and Matilda affect the north of England in 1138? Why were the English victorious? How does Richard distinguish between the Scots and English?

Chapter Three

The Angevin Era, 1154–1216

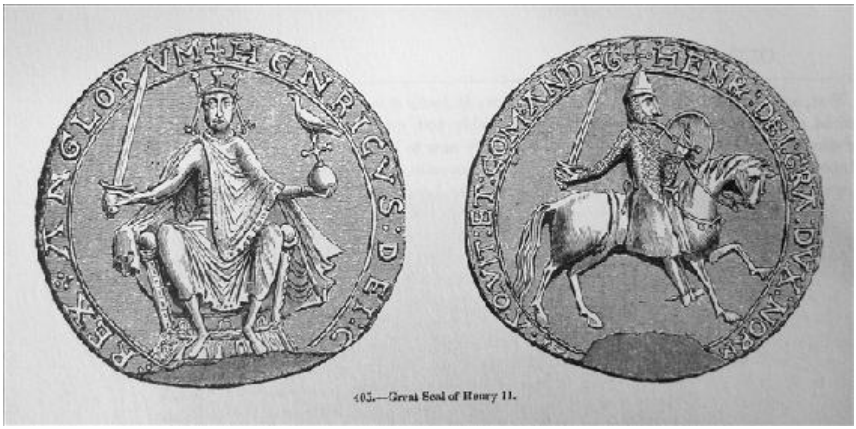

Fig. 29. Seal of Henry II. A nineteenth-century engraving of the great seal of King Henry II (r. 1154–89). Seals were used by medieval kings, and increasingly by other individuals, to authenticate documents, much as signatures are used today. In a pattern typical of the Norman and Angevin kings, Henry is shown enthroned as king of England on the front and mounted as duke of Normandy on the reverse.

33. Gerald of Wales's Description of Henry II

One of the dominant figures in twelfth-century Europe, Henry II (r. 1154–89), the son of the empress Matilda, left multiple legacies to England: in law and justice, in finance and administration, in relations between the king and his vassals, and between the royal government and the Church. Here the Welsh-Norman historian Gerald of Wales, who served as Henry's chaplain for years and thus knew him well, describes the king.

Source: trans. E.P. Cheyney, *Readings in English History Drawn from the Original Sources* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1922), pp. 137–39, with additional material trans. E. Amt from *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. J.F. Dimock (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867), pp. 303–6.

Henry II, king of the English, was a man of ruddy complexion, with a large, round head, piercing, blue-gray eyes, fierce and glowing red in anger, a fiery face and a harsh voice. He was short of neck, square of chest, strong of arm, and fleshy in body. By nature rather than from over-indulgence he had a large paunch, yet not such as to make him sluggish. For he was temperate in food and drink, sober and inclined to be prudent in all things so far as this is permitted to a leader. And so that he might overcome this unkindness on the part of nature by diligence, and lighten the fault of the flesh by greatness of spirit, often by an internal warfare, as it were conspiring against himself, he exercised his body with unbounded activity. Besides, wars frequently occurred; in these he was preeminent in action and gave himself not a moment of rest. In times of peace as well, he took no rest or quiet for himself. Immoderately devoted to hunting, he went out at dawn on a swift horse. Now descending into the valleys, now penetrating the forests, now ascending the peaks of mountains, he spent his days in activity; when he returned to his home in the evening, either before or after the meal one rarely saw him seated. Then after such strenuous exertion on his part he used to weary the whole court by continual marches. But since this is most useful in life: “nothing to excess,” and no remedy is purely good, so he accelerated other problems in his body with frequent swelling of his hands and feet, increased by abuse to these limbs sustained in riding; and if nothing else, he certainly hastened old age, the mother of all ills.

He was a man of medium height, a thing which could not be said of any of his sons—the two elder a little exceeding medium height, while the two younger remained below that stature. Setting aside the activities of his mind and his impulse to anger, he was chief among the eloquent, and—a thing which is most conspicuous in these times—he was most skilled in letters; a man easy to approach, tractable, and courteous; in politeness second to none. As a leader he had so strong a sense of duty that, as often as he conquered in arms, he himself was more often conquered by his sense of justice. Strenuous in war, in peace he was cautious. Often in martial affairs he shrank from the possible disasters of war, and wisely tried all else before resorting to arms. He wept over those lost in the line of battle more than their leader; he was more gentle to the dead soldier than to the living, mourning with much greater grief over the dead than winning the living with his love. When disasters threatened, none was kinder; when security was gained, no one was more severe. Fierce toward the unconquered, merciful toward the conquered; strict toward those at home, easy toward strangers; in public lavish, in private prudent. If he had once hated a man, rarely afterward would he be fond of him, and scarcely ever would he hate one whom he had once loved. He was

especially fond of hawking; he was equally delighted with dogs, which followed wild beasts by sagacity of scent, taking pleasure as well in their loud sonorous barkings as in their swift speed. Would that he had been as much inclined to devotion as he was to hunting!

Fig. 30. Effigies of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. King Henry II (r. 1154–89) and Queen Eleanor are shown here in nineteenth-century engravings drawn from their tomb effigies at the Abbey of Fontévrault in Anjou. From the time of William the Conqueror until the early thirteenth century, most English kings were buried in religious establishments in their French, rather than their English, territories.

After the grave enmity with his sons, instigated, it is said, by their mother, he was a public violator of his marriage vows. With a natural inconstancy, he often and freely broke his word. For whenever matters became difficult, he preferred to break his promise rather than turn from what he was doing, and he would sooner hold his words invalid than abandon his deeds. In all his actions he was prudent and moderate; and on account of this, the remedy going somewhat too far, he was dilatory in doing right and justice, and, to the great harm of his people, he was slow to respond in such matters. And justice should be freely granted, according to God, but justice which is priceless came at a price, and everything available was for sale at a high price and for a profit. . . .

He was a most diligent maker and keeper of peace; he was incomparable in giving alms, especially for the support of the land of Palestine. He was a lover of humility, an enemy of fame and pride. "He filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he sent empty away. He exalted the meek and cast down the mighty from their seats (Luke 1:53)."

He detestably presumed to usurp things which are God's; zealous for justice, though not from knowledge, he joined the rights of the kingdom to those of the Church, gathering both to himself. Although he was a son of the Church and had drawn from her the honor of his position, either unmindful or inattentive to the holy power which had been conferred upon him, he devoted scarcely any time to divine services; and even this little time, perhaps on account of great affairs of state and for the sake of the public welfare, he consumed more in plans and talk than in true devotion. The revenues of the vacant sees he diverted into the public treasury. The mass became corrupted by the working of the leaven, and while the royal purse kept receiving that which Christ demands as his own, new troubles kept arising. In the meantime he kept pouring out the universal treasure, giving to a wicked soldiery what ought to have been given to the priesthood.

Very wisely he planned many things, arranging them carefully. These affairs did not always result in success—in fact, they often turned out quite the opposite. But never did any great disaster occur which did not spring from causes connected with his family. As a father he enjoyed the childhood of his children with natural affection; through their elder years, however, he treated them more as a stepfather. And although great and famous sons were his, nevertheless they were a hindrance to his perfect happiness. Perhaps this was according to his deserts, since he always pursued his successors with hatred. . . . Whether because of some fault in marriage, or as punishment for some parental misdeed, there was never peace between the father and his sons or among the sons themselves. But

having summarily subdued the foes of the kingdom and the disturbers of peace, brothers and sons, natives and foreigners, he saw all that followed went according to his will. If only he had also, by the proper service of good works, finally recognized this ultimate divine favor.

Questions: Which elements of this portrait seem to be standard traits associated with any king? Which have the ring of reality? What does Gerald admire in the king, and what does he criticize? Why? What aspects of Henry's character would most appeal to the twelfth-century public?

34. The Constitutions of Clarendon

Since one of Henry II's projects was the standardization of legal procedures, he wished to assert more authority over the Church, whose ecclesiastical courts were felt to offer excessive protection to clergy who broke the law. In 1164 Henry sought the agreement of church leaders to the Constitutions of Clarendon*, which had been drafted by royal officials and which Henry, somewhat disingenuously, claimed were merely a restatement of well-established customs governing relations between the English Church and government. But Thomas Becket, Henry's former chancellor and now archbishop of Canterbury, balked at approving the* Constitutions*, and thus began his famous quarrel with the king.*

Source: trans. H. Gee and W.G. Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the English Church* (London: Macmillan, 1910), pp. 68–72; revised.

In the year 1164 from our Lord's incarnation, the fourth of the pontificate of Alexander [III], the tenth of Henry II, most illustrious king of the English, in the presence of the same king, was made this remembrance or acknowledgment of a certain part of the customs, liberties, and dignities of his ancestors, that is, of King Henry [I] his grandfather, and of others, which ought to be observed and held in the realm. And owing to strifes and dissensions which had taken place between the clergy and justices of the lord king and the barons of the realm, in respect of customs and dignities of the realm, this recognition was made before the archbishops and bishops and clergy, and the earls and barons and nobles of the realm. And these same customs were recognized by the archbishops and bishops, and earls and barons, and by those of high rank and age in the realm, namely, Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury, and [12 other bishops] conceded, and by word of mouth steadfastly promised on the word of truth, to the lord king and his heirs, should be kept and observed in good faith

and without evil intent, these being present: [38 barons and royal servants, listed by name], and many other magnates and nobles of the realm, clerical as well as lay.

Now of the acknowledged customs and dignities of the realm a certain part is contained in the present document, of which part these are the chapters:

1. If controversy shall arise between laymen, or clergy and laymen, or clergy, regarding advowson [the right to appoint clergy to particular positions] and presentation to churches, let it be treated or concluded in the court of the lord king.

2. Churches belonging to the fee of the lord king [churches on the royal demesne] cannot be granted in perpetuity without his own assent and grant.

3. Clerks cited and accused of any matter shall, when summoned by the king's justice, come into his own court to answer there concerning what it shall seem to the king's court should be answered there, and in the church court for what it shall seem should be answered there; yet so that the king's justice shall send into the court of holy Church to see in what way the matter is there treated. And if the clerk be convicted, or shall confess, the Church must no longer protect him.

4. Archbishops, bishops, and parish clergy of the realm are not allowed to leave the kingdom without license of the lord king; and if they do leave, they shall, if the king so please, give security that neither in going nor in staying nor in returning, will they seek to harm the lord king or realm.

5. Excommunicate persons are not to give pledge for the future, nor to take oath, but only to give security and pledge of abiding by the Church's judgment that they may be absolved.

6. Laymen are not to be accused except by proper and legal accusers and witnesses in the presence of the bishop, so that the archdeacon does not lose his right nor anything due to him thence. And if the accused be such that no one wills or dares to accuse them, the sheriff, when requested by the bishop, shall cause twelve lawful men from the neighborhood or the town to swear before the bishop that they will show the truth in the matter according to their conscience.

7. No one who holds of the king as a tenant in chief, and none of his demesne officers are to be excommunicated, nor are the lands of any one of them to be put under an interdict unless first the lord king, if he be in the country, or his justice if he be

outside the kingdom, be applied to in order that he may do right for him; and so that what shall appertain to the royal court be concluded there, and that what shall belong to the church court be sent to the same to be treated there.

8. If appeals shall occur, they must proceed from the archdeacon to the bishop, and from the bishop to the archbishop. And if the archbishop fails to deliver justice, they must come at last to the lord king, that by his command the dispute be concluded in the archbishop's court, so that it must not go further without the assent of the lord king.

9. If a dispute shall arise between a clerk and a layman, or between a layman and a clerk, as to whether a given tenement is held in free alms or as a lay fee, it shall be concluded by the consideration of the king's chief justice on the award of twelve lawful men . . . before the king's justiciar himself. And if the judgment be that it is held in free alms, it shall be pleaded in the church court, but if [the judgment be that it is held as a] lay fee, unless both claim under the same bishop or baron, it shall be pleaded in his own court, so that for making the award he who was first seised [in possession] will not lose his seisin until the matter is settled by the plea.

10. If anyone living in a city, or castle, or borough, or a demesne manor of the lord king, is cited by archdeacon or bishop for any offense for which he ought to answer, and he refuses to give satisfaction at their citations, it is lawful to place him under interdict; but he must not be excommunicated before the chief officer of the lord king of that town be applied to, in order that he may adjudge him to come for satisfaction. And if the king's officer fails to do this, he shall be at the king's mercy, and thereafter the bishop shall be able to restrain the accused by ecclesiastical justice.

11. Archbishops, bishops, and all persons of the realm who hold of the king as tenants in chief, have their possessions from the lord king as a barony, and are therefore answerable to the king's justices and ministers, and must follow and do all royal rights and customs, and like all other barons, must be present at the trials of the court of the lord king with the barons until it comes to a judgment of loss of limb, or death.

12. When an archbishopric or bishopric is vacant, or any abbey or priory of the king's demesne, it must be in his own hand, and from it he shall receive all revenues and rents as demesne. And when it is time to install a clergyman in that church, the lord

king must cite the chief clergy of the church, and the election must take place in the chapel of the lord king himself, with the assent of the lord king, and the advice of the persons of the realm whom he has summoned to do this. And the person elected shall there do homage and fealty to the lord king as to his liege lord for his life and limbs and earthly honor, saving his order, before he is consecrated.

13. If any of the nobles of the realm forcibly prevent the archbishop or bishop or archdeacon from doing justice in regard of himself or his people, the lord king must bring them to justice. And if by chance anyone should deprive the lord king of his rights, the archbishops and bishops and archdeacons must judge him, so that he gives satisfaction to the lord king.

14. No church or cemetery is to detain the goods of those who are under forfeit of the king against the king's justice, because they belong to the king himself, whether they be found inside churches or outside.

15. Pleas of debts due under pledge of faith or without pledge of faith are to be in the king's justice.

16. Sons of villeins ought not to be ordained without the assent of the lord on whose land they are known to have been born.

Now the record of the aforesaid royal customs and dignities was made by the said archbishops and bishops, and earls and barons, and the nobles and elders of the realm, at Clarendon, on the fourth day before the Purification of the Blessed Mary [29 January], ever Virgin, the lord Henry the king's son with his father the lord king being present there. There are, moreover, many other great customs and dignities of holy mother Church and the lord king and the barons of the realm which are not contained in this writing. And let them be safe for holy Church and the lord king and his heirs and the barons of the realm, and be inviolably observed.

Questions: What are the potential areas of disagreement? What are the implications of the king's assertions of authority over the English Church? What precedents have you encountered, in earlier documents, for the king's position? What are the implications of Becket's resistance to the Constitutions*?*

35. The Murder and Miracles of Thomas Becket

The quarrel between Henry II and Archbishop Thomas Becket,

in which the Constitutions of Clarendon (doc. 34) *featured prominently, quickly escalated and resulted in Becket's exile overseas. Years of bitter argument and tense negotiation followed. In 1170 a compromise allowed the archbishop to return home, which he did in December, the point at which the excerpt below takes up the story. The clerk Edward Grim, author of the biographical extract below, was an eyewitness of and participant in the events at Canterbury, though not those at the royal court in France. The miracles that follow were selected from over four hundred such stories collected by William of Canterbury within five years of Becket's death.*

Source: Grim, trans. W.H. Hutton, *S. Thomas of Canterbury, An Account of His Life and Fame from the Contemporary Biographers and Other Chroniclers* (London: David Nutt, 1899), pp. 233–45, revised; additional material trans. E. Amt from *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, ed. J.C. Robertson (London: Rolls Series, 1875–83), vol. 1, pp. 145, 147, 154, 207, 213–14, 326, 362, 393; vol. 2, pp. 428–30; miracles, trans. E.P. Cheyney, *Readings in English History Drawn from the Original Sources* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1922), pp. 160–64; revised.

Edward Grim's Life of Thomas Becket

Having returned [to England], therefore, with the highest purity and devotion of spirit, the archbishop celebrated the holy nativity of the Savior, cheerfully reminding his people that his own way did not lie among men. On the day of the Lord's nativity, as soon as he had finished his sermon to the people, with a terrible sentence he condemned [Robert de Broc,] one of the king's men, who, had attacked some of the archbishop's servants the day before and, to insult them, had shamefully cut off their horses' tails. And he laid a similar penalty on Ralph de Broc too, who was [Robert's] blood relative and no gentler in character, the originator of all malice, who raged like a wild beast against the archbishop's men and household. And he made it clear to the people that the three bishops [of York, Salisbury, and London] lay under the same sentence, lest anyone communicate with such men, who had dared to challenge the injunction of kings, against the ancient statutes of Christ Church, Canterbury. In conclusion he declared, "Whoever sows hatred and discord between me and my lord the king, let them be accursed by Jesus Christ, and let the memory of them be blotted out from the assembly of the saints." But those whom malice had already armed against the Lord's anointed one were not at all afraid of the declaration of this terrible sentence.

Then the above-named bishops, entrusting themselves to the indignation of the king rather than to the judgment of God and the Church, quickly crossed the sea and went to the king, and bowing at his feet, with enough complaining speech to turn a hard heart, they deplored their suspension, telling how they had been treated by their lord of Canterbury . . . to the disgrace of the king and the kingdom. The accusers added that he would dare even more than he had so far, if the king were to bear such presumption patiently. Beset by such things, as if driven mad, scarcely containing himself in his frenzy, and not realizing what he was exclaiming, the king in the midst of repeated exchanges is said to have spoken thus: "I have nourished and promoted in my realm sluggish and wretched knaves who are faithless to their lord, and permit him to be tricked thus infamously by a low clerk!" He spoke, and withdrew from the midst of the colloquy, seeking a private place, to see whether solitude might ameliorate the madness he had conceived, and reflection might better cast out the raging poison he had swallowed. But his words were heard by four knights, distinguished in birth and members of the king's own household, who fatally interpreted the meaning of the king's words. Permitting no delay, and certainly urged on by one who was a murderer from the beginning, they conspired with one accord in the death of an innocent. And he who inspired the deed made it easy to perpetrate. For, leaving the king utterly ignorant, and embarking on a ship, at their prayer by favorable winds they were transported to England, landing at the "port of dogs" [Dover], and from then on they should be called miserable dogs, not knights. But the king did not know that the knights had departed. . . . But they were carried across the sea with such speed that they could not be recalled or caught by messengers before the sin was committed. It is clear enough from the consequences that their accursed and rash action was contrary to the king's plan and will. For when the martyrdom of the venerable pontiff was announced, such confusion seized his mind, such sadness disturbed him, such unheard-of horror of the deed at the same time swallowed him up and possessed him, that no words can describe it. He tried to determine, since he was ignorant, whether in fact he might have called them back to thwart their purpose, either by custody in prison or any other method. But sometimes God's providence, using evil men for good, thereby honors his beloved one more highly, whence human malice believes in this humility. In fact, human talent and skill are useless against the purpose of the Divinity. Surely it pleased the Savior to snatch from this misery, by martyrdom, one whom fullness of faith had made worthy of martyrdom.

As soon as they landed the said persons, who were not knights but miserable wretches, summoned the king's officials whom the

archbishop had excommunicated, and by dishonestly declaring that they were acting on the king's orders and in his name they got together a band of followers. They gathered together, ready for any impious deed, and on the fifth day after the Nativity of Christ, that is on the day after the festival of the Holy Innocents [29 December], gathered together against the innocent. The hour of dinner being over, the saint had withdrawn with some of his household into an inner room to transact some business, leaving a crowd waiting outside in the hall. The four knights entered with one attendant. They were received with respect as the servants of the king and well known, and those who had waited on the archbishop, being now themselves at dinner, invited them to table. They scorned the food, thirsting rather for blood. By their order the archbishop was informed that four men had arrived from the king and wished to speak with him. He consented and they entered. They sat for a long time in silence and did not salute the archbishop or speak to him. Nor did the man of wise counsel salute them immediately when they came in, that according to the Scripture, "By your words you shall be justified" (Matthew 12:37), he might discover their intentions from their questions. After awhile, however, he turned to them, and carefully scanning the face of each one he greeted them in a friendly manner, but the wretches, who had made a treaty with death, answered his greeting with curses, and ironically prayed that God might help him. At this speech of bitterness and malice the man of God colored deeply, now seeing that they had come to harm him. Whereupon Fitz Urse, who seemed to be the chief among them and the most eager for crime, breathing fury, broke out in these words, "We have something to say to you by the king's command: say if you wish us to say it here before everyone." But the archbishop knew what they were going to say, and replied, "These things should not be spoken in private or in the chamber, but in public." Now these wretches so burned for the slaughter of the archbishop that if the door-keeper had not called back the clerks—for the archbishop had ordered them all to go out—they would have killed him, as they afterward confessed, with the shaft of his cross which stood nearby. When those who had gone out returned, he, who had before thus reviled the archbishop, said, "When peace was made between you and all disputes were ended, the king sent you back free to your own see [the bishop's area of jurisdiction], as you demanded: but you on the other hand, adding insult to your former injuries, have broken the peace and done evil to your lord. For those by whose ministry the king's son was crowned and invested with the honors of sovereignty, you, with obstinate pride, have condemned by sentence of suspension, and you have also bound with the chain of anathema those servants of the king by whose prudent counsels the business of

the kingdom is transacted. From this it is manifest that you would take away the crown from the king's son if you could. Now the plots and schemes you have laid to carry out your designs against the king are known to all. Say, therefore, if you are ready to answer for these things in the king's presence, for this is why we have been sent." The archbishop answered them, "Never was it my wish, as God is my witness, to take away the crown from my lord the king's son, or diminish his power; rather would I wish him three crowns, and would help him obtain the greatest realms of the earth with right and equity. But it is not just for my lord the king to be offended because my people accompany me through the cities and towns, and come out to meet me, when they have for seven years been deprived of the consolation of my presence; and even now I am ready to satisfy him wherever my lord pleases, if I have done anything wrong; but he has forbidden me with threats to enter any of his cities and towns, or even villages. Moreover, the prelates were suspended from their office not by me, but by the lord pope." "It was through you," said the madmen, "that they were suspended. Absolve them." "I do not deny," he answered, "that it was done through me, but it is beyond my power, and utterly incompatible with my position that I should absolve those whom the pope has bound. Let them go to him, on whom reflects the contempt they have shown toward me and their mother, the church of Christ at Canterbury."

"Now," said these butchers, "the king commands you to depart with all your men from the kingdom, and the land which lies under his sway: for from this day on there can be no peace with you, or any of yours, for you have broken the peace." Then he said, "Let your threats cease and your wranglings be stilled. I trust in the king of heaven, who for his own suffered on the Cross: for from this day no one shall see the sea between me and my church. I did not come here to flee; he who wants me shall find me here. And it does not befit the king to so command me; the insults which I and mine have received from the king's servants are sufficient, without further threats." "Thus did the king command," they replied, "and we will make it good, for whereas you ought to have shown respect to the king's majesty, and submitted your vengeance to his justice, you have followed the impulse of your passion and basely thrust from the church his ministers and servants." At these words Christ's champion, rising in fervor of spirit against his accusers, exclaimed, "Whoever shall presume to violate the decrees of the sacred Roman see or the laws of Christ's church, and shall refuse to make satisfaction, I will not spare him, whoever he may be, nor will I delay to inflict ecclesiastical censures on the delinquents."

Confounded by these words the knights sprang up, for they could

bear his firmness no longer, and coming close to him they said, “We declare to you that you have spoken in peril of your head.” “Do you come to kill me?” he answered, “I have committed my cause to the judge of all; and so I am not moved by threats, nor are your swords more ready to strike than my soul is for martyrdom. Seek him who flees from you; me you will find foot to foot in the battle of the Lord.” As they went out with tumult and insults, he who was fitly surnamed Ursus [meaning bear], called out in a brutal way, “In the king’s name we order you clerks and monks to take and hold that man, lest he escape by flight before the king has full justice on his body.” As they went out with these words, the man of God followed them to the door and exclaimed, “Here, here you shall find me,” putting his hand over his neck as though showing the place where they were to strike. He returned then to the place where he had sat before, and consoled his clerks, and exhorted them not to fear; and, as it seemed to us who were present, waited as unperturbed—though they sought to slay him alone—as though they had come to invite him to a wedding. Before long back the butchers returned with swords and axes and falchions [single-edged swords] and other weapons fit for the crime which their minds were set on. When they found the doors barred and they were not opened to their knocking, they turned aside by a private way through the orchard to a wooden partition which they cut and hacked till they broke it down. The servants and clerks were horribly frightened by this terrible noise, and, like sheep before the wolf, dispersed here and there. Those who remained called out that he should flee to the church, but he did not forget his promise not to flee from his murderers through fear of death, and refused to go. . . . He who had long sighed for martyrdom now saw that, as it seemed, the occasion had now come, and feared lest he should delay it or put it away altogether if he went into the church. But the monks were insistent, declaring that it were not fit for him to be absent from vespers, which were at that moment being performed. He remained immoveable in that place of less reverence, for he had now in his mind caught a sight of the hour of happy consummation for which he had sighed so long, and he feared lest the reverence of the sacred place should deter even the impious from their purpose, and cheat him of his heart’s desire. . . . But when he would not be persuaded by argument or prayer to take refuge in the church, the monks caught hold of him in spite of his resistance, and pulled, dragged, and pushed him, not heeding his protests, and brought him to the church. . . .

When the holy archbishop entered the church, the monks stopped the vespers which they had begun and ran to him, glorifying God at the sight of their father, whom they had heard was dead, alive and

safe. They hastened, by bolting the doors of the church, to protect their shepherd from the slaughter. But the champion, turning to them, ordered the church doors to be thrown open, saying, “It is not meet to make a fortress of the house of prayer, the Church of Christ: even if it is not shut up, it is still able to protect its own, and we shall triumph over the enemy in suffering rather than in fighting, for we came to suffer, not to resist.” And straightway, they entered the house of peace and reconciliation with swords sacrilegiously drawn, striking horror in the beholders’ hearts by their very looks and the clanging of their arms. . . .

Inspired by fury the knights called out, “Where is Thomas Becket, traitor to the king and realm?” When he did not answer, they cried out the more furiously, “Where is the archbishop?” At this, intrepid and fearless, as it is written, “the just, like a bold lion, shall be without fear” (cf. Proverbs 28:1) he descended from the stair where he had been dragged by the monks in fear of the knights, and in a clear voice answered, “I am here, no traitor to the king, but a priest. Why do you seek me?” And whereas he had already said that he did not fear them, he added, “So I am ready to suffer in his name, who redeemed me by his blood: far be it from me to flee from your swords, or to depart from justice.” Having spoken thus, he turned to the right, under a pillar, having on one side the altar of the blessed Mother of God and ever Virgin Mary, on the other that of Saint Benedict the Confessor, by whose example and prayers, having crucified the world with its lusts, he bore all that the murderers could do with such constancy of soul as if he were no longer in the flesh. The murderers followed him. “Absolve,” they cried, “and restore to communion those whom you have excommunicated, and restore their powers to those whom you have suspended.” He answered, “There has been no satisfaction, and I will not absolve them.” “Then you shall die,” they cried, “and receive what you deserve.” “I am ready,” he replied, “to die for my Lord, that in my blood the Church may obtain liberty and peace. But in the name of almighty God, I forbid you to hurt my people, whether clerk or lay.” Thus piously and thoughtfully did the noble martyr ensure that no one near him should be hurt, nor the innocent be brought to death, whereby his glory should be dimmed as he hastened to Christ. . . . Then they laid sacrilegious hands on him, pulling and dragging him so that they might kill him outside the church, or carry him away as a prisoner, as they afterward confessed. But when he could not be forced away from the pillar, one of them pressed on him and clung to him more closely. He pushed him off calling him “pimp,” and saying, “Touch me not, Reginald, you who owe me fealty and subjection; you and your accomplices are acting like madmen.” The knight, fired with terrible rage at this severe

repulse, waved his sword over the sacred head. “No faith,” he cried, “nor subjection do I owe you against my fealty to my lord, the king.” Then the unconquered martyr, seeing the hour at hand which should put an end to this miserable life and straightaway give him the crown of immortality promised by the Lord, inclined his neck as one who prays and joining his hands he lifted them up, and commended his cause and that of the Church to God, to Saint Mary, and to the blessed martyr Saint Denis. Scarce had he said the words than the wicked knight, fearing lest he should be rescued by the people and escape alive, leapt upon him suddenly and wounded this lamb who was sacrificed to God on the head, cutting off the top of the crown which the sacred unction of the chrism had dedicated to God, and by the same blow he wounded the arm of him who tells this. For he [Edward Grim], when the others, both monks and clerks, fled, stuck close to the sainted archbishop and held him in his arms until the one he interposed was almost severed. Behold the simplicity of the dove, the wisdom of the serpent, in the martyr who opposed his body to those who struck that he might preserve his head, that is his soul and the Church, unharmed, nor would he use any means to escape from those who destroyed his body. O worthy shepherd, who gave himself so boldly to the wolves that his flock might not be torn! Because he had rejected the world, the world, wishing to crush him, unknowingly exalted him. Then he received a second blow on the head but still stood firm. At the third blow he fell on his knees and elbows, offering himself a living victim, and saying in a low voice, “For the name of Jesus and the protection of the Church I am ready to embrace death.” Then the third knight inflicted a terrible wound as he lay, by which the sword was broken against the pavement, and the crown which was large was separated from the head, so that the blood, white with the brain, and the brain, red with blood, dyed the surface of the virgin mother Church with the life and death of the confessor and martyr in the colors of the lily and the rose. The fourth knight prevented anyone from interfering so that the others might freely perpetrate the murder. As for the fifth, no knight but that clerk who had entered with the knights, so that the martyr who was in other things like Christ would not lack a fifth blow, he put his foot on the neck of the holy priest and precious martyr, and, horrible to say, scattered his brains and blood over the pavement, calling out to the others, “Let us away, knights, he will rise no more.”

Miracles of Saint Thomas, by William of Canterbury

Of a matron who on the seventh day spoke with the martyr in her sleep

Seven days had passed since the death of the martyr. A certain freeborn woman, wife of one Ralph, a man of honor according to this world, was resting on her bed at home. This woman, hearing of the death of the martyr, began to be somewhat sad, mourning as a good sheep for the death of a kind shepherd, for the dishonor to the Church and the wickedness of the crime. Because of this sorrow she obtained the honor of seeing a vision in her sleep. Upon entering her place of prayer she found a man standing before the altar, wearing a hood and clad in white, as though he were performing the divine service. When he saw her he seated himself near the southern part of the room, nodding familiarly to her as if seeking to ask that she draw nearer. She asked what she could do to gain salvation for her soul. He replied, "Every week the sixth day must be observed as a fast day by you, and when you have passed a year in this way come to me." Then he added, "Do you know who it is with whom you are conversing?" "You are the one," she answered, "whom those four wicked men presumed to murder with such insolent boldness."

Of a townsman whom the martyr suddenly snatched from this world, because he had snatched a poor woman's sheep

A rich man named Ralph, of the town of Nottingham, detained some few sheep of a poor woman. This latter begged to be permitted to buy them back, saying, "Grant this kindness, I beg, my master, to your handmaid, that I may receive back my sheep, provided I pay eight pieces of silver for each one." He refused, since he wished to keep those sheep she owned for himself. Hear what happened, in order that you may not be enticed to become rich from the goods of another. He was riding along on his pacer, snapping a switch which he was carrying in his hand. The woman pressed him that she might have the property which was really hers by paying for it. "Do not hinder my journey, my master," said she; "I have planned to go to the holy martyr Thomas, and I have destined the wool of my sheep to pay my expenses on the way. Show mercy to me, that the martyr may do the same to you." Hearing this he looked down at her, calling out in terrible tones, "Depart, you low and worthless slave, I shall do nothing for you." She kept urging him, adding prayers to her money; but seeing that she gained nothing either from prayers or money, she ended with a curse. "May the curse of God and of the martyr Thomas fall on this man who has robbed me of my own property." At this word the rich man, struck by the divine hand, fell heavily forward on the pommel of his saddle, where, groaning, he moaned, "I die," for the blow had stopped his breath.

Of a girl who had sunk in some water

Thanks be to God, who glorifies his martyr Thomas everywhere. In Normandy there was a little girl, Hawisia, daughter of a peasant of the village of Grochet, who, as she was wandering along in her thoughtless childish way, fell into a pond. She was only two years and three months old. When she was not found by her mother the next day or the day following that, she was sought for and found in the pool. The mother, crying out, ran to her, while the father hastened to her all dripping as she was, and, seizing her, held her by the feet. The neighbors came running up and she was pronounced dead. But at the advice of a priest she was dedicated to the holy martyr Thomas, and she was restored to life the instant the vow was made.

Questions: How did Becket's death come about? What was his own role in it? How did contemporaries view him, both before and after his death? What is Edward Grim's attitude toward the archbishop and toward the king? How would Thomas of Canterbury's stories have helped spread devotion to Thomas's cult? What do the miracles tell us about medieval life and beliefs?

36. Glanville's *Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Kingdom of England*

In the 1180s a treatise describing English civil law was written by someone familiar with the procedures of the royal courts and with Henry II's reforms; the name of the then-justiciar Ranulf Glanville has traditionally been attached to this work, though there is little evidence supporting his authorship. By far the greatest concern of the civil law was title to land. The excerpts below describe some traditional aspects of land law (dower and inheritance customs) and some of Henry II's innovations (the Grand Assize). The sample writs that the author includes in the treatise have been omitted.

Source: trans. J. Beames, *A Translation of Glanville*, ed. J.H. Beale (Washington: John Byrne & Company, 1900), pp. 31, 35–37, 39–42, 44–46, 48–55, 91–105, 113–16, 124–28, 133–36, 138–47, 149–50; revised.

Book 2. . . . Of Those Things Which Appertain to the Duel or Grand Assize

3. . . . The demand and claim of the demandant being thus made, the tenant shall have the choice of either defending himself against the demandant by the duel, or putting himself upon the king's Grand Assize, and requiring a recognition to ascertain which of the two has

the greater right to the land in dispute.

. . . But here we should observe, that after the tenant has once waged the duel he must abide by his choice, and cannot afterward put himself upon the Assize. . . . All the delays which can with propriety be resorted to having expired, it is requisite that before the duel can take place, the demandant should appear in court, accompanied by his champion armed for the contest. Nor will it suffice, if he then produce any other champion than one of those whom he has engaged to prove his claim: neither, indeed, can any other contend for him, after the duel has been once waged. . . .

The duel being finished, a fine of 60s. shall be imposed upon the conquered party, in the name of *recreantise* [acknowledgment of defeat], besides which he shall lose his law; and if the champion of the tenant should be conquered, his principal shall lose the land in question, with all the fruits and produce found upon it at the time of the seisin of the fee, and never again shall a complaint concerning the same land be heard in court. For those matters which have been once determined in the king's court by duel remain forever after unalterable. Upon the determination of the suit, let the sheriff be commanded by the following writ to give possession of the land to the successful party. . . .

6. But, if the tenant should prefer putting himself upon the king's Grand Assize, the demandant must either adopt the same course or decline it. If the demandant has once conceded in court that he would put himself upon the Assize, and has so expressed himself before the Justices of the Common Pleas, he cannot afterward retract, but ought either to stand or fall by the Assize.

If he objects to putting himself upon the Grand Assize, he ought in such case to show some cause why the Assize should not proceed between them. . . .

7. The Grand Assize is a certain royal benefit bestowed upon the people, and emanating from the clemency of the prince, with the advice of his nobles. So effectually does this proceeding preserve the lives and civil condition of men, that every one may now possess his right in safety, at the same time that he avoids the doubtful event of the duel. Nor is this all: the severe punishment of an unexpected and premature death is avoided, or at least the opprobrium of a lasting infamy, of that dreadful and ignominious word that so disgracefully resounds from the mouth of the conquered champion.

This legal institution flows from the most profound equity. For that justice, which after many and long delays is scarcely, if ever, elicited by the duel, is more advantageously and expeditiously attained through the benefit of this institution. This Assize, indeed, allows not

so many delays as the duel, as will be seen in the sequel. And by this course of proceeding, both the labor of men and the expenses of the poor are saved. Besides, by so much as the testimony of many credible witnesses, in judicial proceedings, preponderates over that of only one, by so much greater equity is this institution regulated than that of the duel. For since the duel proceeds upon the testimony [the combat] of one juror, this constitution requires the oaths of at least twelve lawful men.

These are the proceedings which lead to the Assize. The party who puts himself upon the Assize should, from the first, . . . sue out a writ for keeping the peace. . . .

10. By means of such writs, the tenant may protect himself, and may put himself upon the Assize, until his adversary, appearing in court, pray another writ, in order that four lawful knights of the county, and of the neighborhood, might elect twelve lawful knights from the same neighborhood, who should say, upon oath, which of the litigating parties has the greater right to the land in question. . . .

12. . . . [Because of the large number of possible delays,] a certain just constitution has been passed, under which the court is authorized to expedite the suit, upon the four knights appearing in court on the appointed day, and being prepared to proceed to the election of the twelve knights. . . . But, if the tenant himself be present in court, he may possibly have a just cause of exception against one or more of the twelve knights, and concerning this he should be heard in court. It is usual, indeed, for the purpose of satisfying the absent party, not to confine the number to be elected to twelve, but to comprise as many more as may incontrovertibly satisfy such absent party, when he returns to court. . . .

Indeed, if the object is to expedite the proceedings, it will more avail to follow the direction of the court, than to observe the accustomed course of the law. It is, therefore, committed to the discretion and judgment of the king or his justices, to temper the proceeding so as to render it more beneficial and equitable. . . .

14. The election of the twelve knights having been made, they should be summoned to appear in court, prepared upon their oaths to declare which of them, namely, the tenant or the demandant, possesses the greater right to the property in question. Let the summons be made by the following writ. . . .

16. On the day fixed for the attendance of the twelve knights to take the recognition, whether the tenant appears or absent himself, the recognition shall proceed without delay. . . .

17. When the Assize proceeds to make recognition, the right will

be well known either to all the jurors, or some may know it and some not, or all may be alike ignorant concerning it. If none of them are acquainted with the truth of the matter, and this be testified upon their oaths in court, recourse must be had to others, until such can be found who do know the truth of it. Should it, however, happen that some of them know the truth of the matter, and some not, the latter are to be rejected, and others summoned to court, until twelve, at least, can be found who are unanimous. But, if some of the jurors should decide for one party, and some of them for the other, then others must be added, until at least twelve can be found who agree in favor with one side. Each of the knights summoned for this purpose ought to swear that he will neither utter that which is false, nor knowingly conceal the truth. With respect to the knowledge requisite on the part of those sworn, they should be acquainted with the merits of the cause, either from what they have personally seen and heard, or from the declarations of their fathers or other equally creditable sources, as if falling within their own immediate knowledge.

18. When the twelve knights . . . entertain no doubt about the truth of the thing, then the Assize must proceed to ascertain whether the demandant or the tenant has the greater right to the subject in dispute.

But if they decide in favor of the tenant, or make any other declaration by which it should sufficiently appear to the king or his justices that the tenant has greater right to the subject in dispute, then, by the judgment of the court, he shall be . . . forever released from the claim of the demandant, who shall never again be heard in court concerning the matter. For those questions which have once been lawfully determined by the king's Grand Assize cannot with propriety be revived on any subsequent occasion. But if by this Assize it be decided in court in favor of the demandant, then his adversary shall lose the land in question, which shall be restored to the demandant, together with all the fruits and produce found upon the land at the time of seisin. . . .

Book 6. Of Dower

1. The term dower is used in two senses. Dower, in the sense in which it is commonly used, means that which any free man, at the time of his being affianced, gives to his bride at the church door. For every man is bound by the ecclesiastical as well as the secular law to endow his bride at the time he is affianced to her. When a man endows his bride, he either names the dower, or not. In the latter case, the third part of all the husband's freehold land is understood to be the wife's dower; and the third part of all such freehold lands as her husband

held at the time of affiancing, and of which he was seised in his demesne, is termed a woman's reasonable dower. If, however, the man names the dower, and mentions more than a third part, such designation shall not avail, as far as it applies to the quantity. It shall be reduced by apportionment to the third part; because a man may endow a woman of less, but cannot endow her of more than a third part of his land.

2. Should it happen, as it sometimes does, that a man endows a woman, having but a small freehold at the time of his being affianced, he may afterward enlarge her dower to the third part or less of the lands he may have purchased.

But if upon the assignment of dower, no mention was made concerning purchases, even admitting that at the time of affiancing he possessed but a small estate, and that he afterward much increased it, the wife cannot claim as dower more than a third part of such land as her husband held at the time of being affianced, and when he endowed her. The same rule prevails if a man, not being possessed of any land, should endow his wife with his chattels, and other things, or even with money. Should he afterward make considerable purchases in land and tenements, the wife cannot claim any part of such property so acquired by purchase; it being, with respect to the quantity or quality of the dower assigned to any woman, a general principle, that if she is satisfied to the extent of her endowment at the door of the church, she can never afterward claim as dower anything beyond it.

3. It is understood that a woman cannot make any disposition of her dower during the lifetime of her husband. For since the wife herself is in a legal sense under the absolute power of her husband, . . . the dower, as well as the woman herself and all things belonging to her, should be considered to be fully at the disposal of the husband. . . .

4. Upon the death of the husband of a woman, her dower, if it has been named, will either be vacant or not.

In the former case, the woman may, with the consent of the heir, enter upon her dower, and retain the possession of it. If, however, the dower be not vacant, either the whole will be so circumstanced, or some part will be vacant, and some not. If a certain part be vacant, and a certain part not, she may pursue the course we have described, and enter into the part which is vacant; and for the residue, she shall have a writ of right, directed to her warrantor [her husband's heir], in order to compel him to do complete justice concerning the land which she claims as appertaining to her reasonable dower. . . .

6. The plea shall be discussed in the court of the warrantor by

virtue of this writ, until it be proved that such court has failed in doing justice. . . . Upon proof of this, the suit shall be removed into the county court, through the medium of which the suit may, at the pleasure of the king or his chief justiciary, be lawfully transferred to the king's court. . . .

8. Pleas of this description, as, indeed, some others, may be transferred from the county court to the supreme court of the king for a variety of causes: as, on account of any doubt which may arise in the county court concerning the plea itself, and which that court is unable to decide. . . . Upon the day appointed in court, either both parties will be absent, or only one will be, or both will appear. . . . If both be present in court, the woman shall set forth her claim against her adversary in the following words: "I demand such land, as appertaining to such land as was named to me in dower, and of which my husband endowed me at the door of the church, the day he espoused me, as that of which he was invested and seised at the time when he endowed me."

Various are the answers which the adverse party usually gives to a claim of this kind; in substance, however, he will either deny that she was so endowed, or concede it.

But, whatever he may allege, the suit ought not to proceed without the heir of the woman's husband. He shall, therefore, be summoned to appear in court to hear the suit, by the following writ. . . .

Should the heir, after having been summoned, neither appear, nor essoin himself [give a legal excuse for not appearing], on the first, second, nor third day; or if, after having cast the usual essoins, he should on the fourth day neither appear nor send his attorney, there may be a question of how he ought to be, or can be, distrained, consistently with the law and custom of the realm. In the opinion of some, his appearance in court shall be compelled by distraining his fee. And [they think] that, therefore, by the direction of the court so much of his fee shall be taken into the king's hands as may be necessary to distrain him to appear in court to show whether he ought to warrant [guarantee to the woman] the land in question or not. Others think that his appearance in court for such purpose may be obtained by attaching him with pledges.

11. When, at last, the heir of the husband of the woman, the complainant, appears in court, either he will affirm the fact, and concede that the land in question appertains to the dower of the woman, . . . or he will deny it. If the heir admits this in court, he shall then be bound to recover the land against the tenant, if [the tenant] be disposed to dispute the matter, and then deliver it to the woman; and thus the contest will be changed into one between the tenant and

the heir.

If, however, the heir be unwilling to contest the point, he shall be bound to give to the woman a fair equivalent; because the woman herself shall not afterward sustain any loss. But, if the heir himself neither admit nor concede to the woman that which she alleges against the tenant, then the suit may proceed between the woman and the heir . . . [and] the matter may be decided by the duel, provided the woman produces in court those who heard and saw the endowment, or any proper witness who may have heard and seen the fact of her being endowed by the ancestor of the heir at the church door, at the time of the espousals, and be ready to prove such fact against him.

Should the woman prevail against the heir in the duel, then the heir shall be bound to deliver the land in question to the woman, or to give her an adequate recompense.

Questions: What options are available for settling a land dispute? Why would the crown encourage litigants to use the Grand Assize rather than settle disputes via trial by combat? What were the advantages and disadvantages of widowhood? Can you deduce the reasons for laws regarding wills and heirs? What do these laws reveal about the legal status of women?

37. Jocelin of Brakelond on the Misfortunes of Henry of Essex

Henry of Essex was a locally important baron and, in the 1150s, a royal constable. While we know a fair amount about him from record sources, this narrative account of his life, found in a monastic chronicle, is unusual for a layman. Though short, it sheds light on many aspects of medieval life. The duel in this story represents the normal method of deciding a judicial dispute between two vassals in their lord's court—in this case, two barons in the court of their lord, King Henry II, in 1163. It is perhaps relevant that Robert de Montfort, Henry of Essex's accuser, had a competing claim to Henry's castle and lands at Haughley, which Robert's family had lost during the reign of Henry I.

Source: trans. L.C. Jane, *The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond, Monk of St. Edmundsbury: A Picture of Monastic and Social Life in the XIIth Century* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1907), pp. 108–12; revised.

When the abbot had come to Reading, and we with him, we were rightly received by the monks of that place. And among them was Henry of Essex as a professed monk, who, when he had a chance to speak to the abbot and to those who were present, told us how he had

been conquered in a trial by battle, and how and why Saint Edmund confounded him in the very hour of conflict. I wrote down his tale by command of the lord abbot, and I wrote it also in these words.

Inasmuch as it is impossible to avoid unknown evil, we have thought it well to commit to writing the acts and crimes of Henry of Essex, that they may be a warning, and not an example. Stories often convey a useful and salutary warning.

The said Henry, then, while he enjoyed great prosperity, had the reputation of a great man among the nobles of the realm, and he was renowned by birth, noted for his deeds of arms, the standardbearer of the king, and feared by all men owing to his might. And when others who lived near him enriched the church of the blessed king and martyr Edmund [the monastery at Bury Saint Edmunds] with goods and rents, he on the contrary not only shut his eyes to this fact, but further violently, and wrongfully, and by injuries took away the annual rent of five shillings, and converted it to his own use.

In the course of time, moreover, when a case arose in the court of Saint Edmund concerning a wrong done to a certain maiden, the same Henry came there, and protested and declared that the trial ought to be held in his court because the place where the said maiden was born was within his lordship of Lailand. With the excuse of this affair, he dared to trouble the court of Saint Edmund for a long while with journeyings and countless charges.

But fortune, which had assisted his wishes in these and other like matters, brought upon him a cause for lasting grief, and after mocking him with a happy beginning, planned a sad conclusion for him; for it is the custom of fortune to smile, that she may rage; to flatter, that she may deceive; and to raise up only that she may cast down. For presently there rose against him Robert de Montfort, his relative, and a man not unequal to him in birth and power, and slandered him in the presence of the princes of the land, accusing him of treason to the king. For he asserted that Henry, in the course of the Welsh war [in 1157], in the difficult pass of Coleshill, had treacherously cast down the standard of the lord king, and proclaimed his death in a loud voice; and that he had induced those who were coming to the help of the king to turn in flight. As a matter of fact, the said Henry of Essex believed that the renowned King Henry II, who had been caught in an ambush by the Welsh, had been slain, and this would have been the truth, had not Roger, earl of Clare, a man renowned in birth and more renowned for his deeds of arms, quickly rushed up with his men of Clare, and raised the standard of the lord king, which revived the strength and courage of the whole army.

Then Henry resisted the said Robert in the council, and utterly

denied the charge, so that after a little while, [in 1163] the matter came to a trial by battle. Then when they met at Reading to fight on an island somewhat near the abbey, a multitude of persons also gathered there to see how the affair would end. And it came to pass, that when Robert manfully made his armor ring again with hard and frequent blows, and his bold beginning promised the fruit of victory, Henry's strength began to fail him a little. And as he looked round about, behold! on the edge of land and water, he saw the glorious king and martyr Edmund, armed and, as it were, flying through the air, and looking toward him with an angry countenance, often shaking his head in a threatening manner, and showing himself full of wrath. And Henry also saw with the saint another knight, Gilbert de Cereville, who appeared not only less than the saint in point of dignity, but also head and shoulders shorter; and he looked on him with accusing and angry glances. This Gilbert, afflicted with bonds and tortures by order of the said Henry, had died, as the result of an accusation brought against him by Henry's wife, who cast the penalty for her own illdoing on an innocent man, and said that she could not endure the evil suggestions of the said Gilbert.

When he saw these sights, then, Henry grew alarmed and fearful, and called to mind that an old crime brings new shame. And now, giving up all hope, and abandoning skillful fighting for a blind rush, he took the part of one who attacks rather than that of one who defends himself. And when he gave hard blows, he received harder; and while he fought manfully, he was more manfully resisted. In a word, he fell conquered.

And as he was thought to be dead, in accordance with the earnest request of the magnates of England, the relatives of the said Henry, the monks of that place were allowed to give burial to his corpse. But he afterward revived, and when he had regained the blessing of health, under the regular habit of a monk, he wiped out the stain of his former life, and taking care to purify the long week of his dissolute past with at least one sabbath, he cultivated the study of the virtues, to bring forth the fruit of happiness.

Questions: What were Henry's "crimes?" How does the monastic context shape the story of Henry's life? From a non-religious perspective, what brought about Henry's downfall?

38. The Political Career of Eleanor of Aquitaine

Married to the future Henry II in 1152, soon after the dissolution of her marriage to the French king Louis VII,

Eleanor of Aquitaine helped rule England for decades, first as Henry's queen and regent in Aquitaine, and later as an advisor to her sons Richard I (r. 1189–99) and John (r. 1199–1216). The first letter below is thought to have been written by Peter of Blois, a clerk in the service of Archbishop Rotrou of Rouen, at the archbishop's behest, after Henry II's three eldest sons, encouraged and supported by Eleanor, rose in rebellion against their father. In an interesting twist, twenty years later Peter of Blois also wrote the second letter, one of three sent in Eleanor's name to Pope Celestine III during King Richard I's captivity following the Third Crusade. While Eleanor (like all twelfth-century elites) did not write her own letters, this document certainly expresses her anger and frustration at what she felt to be the papacy's inaction during her son's thirteen-month-long captivity.

Source: trans. K.A. Smith from *Patrologia cursus completus, series latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1844–64), vol. 207, cols. 448–49; vol. 206, cols. 1262–65.

[Peter of Blois, writing on behalf of] Archbishop Rotrou of Rouen, to Queen Eleanor, 1173

To the queen of England, the archbishop of Rouen and his suffragen bishops send their greetings in the search for peace. It is publicly known—and indeed, no Christian can be allowed to ignore this fact—that marriage is a firm and indissoluble union. Those who have been joined together in marriage cannot be separated. This is confirmed by sacred truth, which cannot lie: as it is written, "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder (Matthew 19:6)." Just as anyone who separates spouses breaks the divine command, so, too, does the wife who separates herself from her husband and disregards the faith of this social bond. When two spouses are made one in the flesh, a spiritual union necessarily follows from their bodily union and common consent. A woman who is not subject to a man defies the natural order of things as well as the injunction of the Gospel. For "the woman's head is the man" (1 Corinthians 11:3), from whose flesh she was made; she is joined to the man, and subject to the man's authority. And so we are deeply grieved by the well-known and lamentable charge against you, a most prudent woman who has nonetheless abandoned her husband. [Such a woman] has forsaken his side, the body's limb has turned against its head; even worse, you have encouraged the lord king's children, who are also yours, to rebel against their father. It is fitting to echo the words of the prophet, who said, "I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have

despised me (Isaiah 1:2).” Would that, as another prophet lamented, our life would reach its final hour and the face of the earth would swallow us so that we would not have to witness such evil! Because we know that if you do not return to your husband, there will be destruction everywhere, and what is now your sin alone will soon be shared by the entire kingdom. And so, illustrious queen, return to your husband and our lord; convert turmoil into peace through your reconciliation and restore universal happiness through your return. If you are not moved to do this by our prayers, at least take heed of the suffering of your people, the looming oppression of the Church and the destruction of the kingdom. For either truth lies, or “every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation (Luke 11:17).” The lord king himself cannot bring this desolation to an end; his sons and heirs—who have been led by your feminine hand and boyish council to rebel against this king, to whom the mightiest kings have bowed their necks. Before things get any worse, you and your sons must return to your husband, whom you are bound to obey and to live with. Repent, or you and your sons will be held in suspicion. We are very certain that he will receive you with love and ensure your safety. I beseech you to warn your sons to submit and show their love for their father, who has suffered so much anguish, so much persecution, so much illness. Lest rash actions waste and destroy what has been built up with so much sweat, we say these words to you, most pious queen, in zeal for God and with a feeling of sincere love. After all, you and your husband are both our parishioners. We cannot desert the cause of justice.

Unless you return to your husband we will be bound by canon law to use ecclesiastical authority to censure you. We will be bound to do this, albeit unwillingly, and with sorrow and tears, if you do not regain your senses. Farewell.

Queen Eleanor to Pope Celestine III, 1193

To the reverend father and lord Celestine, pope by the grace of God. Eleanor, by the wrath of God queen of the English, duchess of the Normans, and countess of the Angevins, begs him to show himself to be a father to her, a miserable mother.

I had determined to remain silent, lest through the fullness of my heart and the violence of my grief I might utter any imprudent word against you, the prince of the priesthood, and be blamed for my insolence and presumption. The violent onset of grief is not unlike madness: it does no homage to princes, pays no respect to allies, it defers to no one and spares no one, not even itself. No one should be surprised, then, if the strength of my grief has roughened my words,

for I mourn a public loss even as a private grief has taken root in my innermost spirit. . . . The nations are divided, the peoples torn apart, lands laid waste, and the whole of the Latin Church moved in a spirit of contrition and humility to lament and beseech you, whom God has placed over the peoples and kingdoms in the fullness of power. We hope that the cries of the afflicted will reach your ears, for our troubles are multiplied beyond number (cf. Psalm 39:14). Nor can you plead ignorance of that crime and infamy, since you are the vicar of the crucified, the successor of Peter, the priest of Christ, the chosen one of God, the God even of Pharoah.

. . . If the Roman Church can sit by with clasped hands and silently bear such injuries to Christ, "let God arise" (Psalm 67:1) and judge our cause and "look on the face of Christ (Psalm 83:10)." Where is the zeal of Elias against Ahab? Of John the Baptist against Herod? Of Ambrose against Valentinian? Of Pope Alexander III who, as we saw and heard, solemnly and terribly used the full power of the apostolic see to cut off Frederick [Barbarossa, Holy Roman Emperor], the father of this prince [Henry VI] from the communion of the faithful? In the future such a tyrant will scorn the apostolic keys and hold the law of God to be empty words. Against such an enemy you must firmly take up "the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17)." For it is written, "He that despises you, despises me (Luke 10:16)." And so, if you do not wish any injury to be done to yourself or to the Roman Church, you cannot pretend not to know of Saint Peter's shame and Christ's injury. Do not keep the word of God prisoner in your mouth, lest through your human fear the spirit of liberty be overthrown. It is better to fall into the hands of men than to desert God's law.

. . . How can you balance the good books of justice, you whom Henry [II] of blessed memory, father of that king [Richard], sustained with much needed aid during that schism, and supported against the hostile tyranny of Frederick [Barbarossa] when he harrassed you and your faithful supporters and threatened the possessions of the Roman Church? When Frederick, instigator of schism and author of resistance to Pope Alexander III who was, as you know, canonically elected, vowed his support for the apostate Octavian [a rival pope]. While the Church was suffering through the upheaval of that schism in every land, the kings of England and France received embassies from each party. And when the French king's counselors wavered, doubtfully hesitating over which party they should support, King Henry, grieving that Christ's tunic should be torn in two, was the first to favor Pope Alexander, and he brought the French king over to his side with many admonitions and words of advice; thus he delivered the ship of Saint Peter from shipwreck and brought it to a safe harbor. We witnessed these things with our own eyes. . . . If, therefore, ingratitude could

ever efface the memory of such a favor, it would greatly dishonor the glory of the apostolic see.

Questions: What assumptions about gender roles and queenship are expressed in the first letter? Given the tone of the second letter, how might Eleanor have responded to the archbishop's scolding? How does Eleanor attempt to enlist Pope Celestine III's help in freeing her son Richard from captivity? In what ways does she assert her own authority here?

39. The Cult of King Arthur

The cleric Geoffrey of Monmouth's hugely influential History of the Kings of Britain *laid the foundation for the elaboration of Arthurian legends by later English writers. A patriotic work of myth-history, the* History *celebrates the heroic exploits of Arthur, greatest of Britain's kings. Geoffrey completed his work ca 1136, dedicating it to the earl of Gloucester Robert Fitzroy, whose nephew Henry II came to rule an enormous Angevin "empire," the parameters of which recalled Arthur's own. In the second text, Gerald of Wales credits Henry II with inspiring the exhumation of Arthur's body at Glastonbury Abbey. Ca 1191, at a moment of financial crisis for the abbey, its monks claimed to have discovered the skeletons of a huge man and a woman, along with a lead cross identifying these as Arthur and Guinevere. The monks interred these remains in their church, where they became a very popular and profitable attraction for pilgrims.*

Sources: Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Histories of the Kings of Britain*, trans. Sebastian Evans (London: J.M. Dent & Company, 1904), pp. 226–27, 240, 287–92, revised; Gerald of Wales, *De instructione principis*, in *Geraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. George F. Werner, trans. K.A. Smith (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1891), vol. 8, pp. 126–29.

[Geoffrey of Monmouth's Account of Arthur's Reign]

After the death of Uther Pendragon, the barons of Britain came together from various provinces to the city of Silchester, and suggested to Dubricius, archbishop of the City of Legions, that he should crown as king Arthur, the late king's son. For they were in dire need, seeing that when the Saxons heard of Uther's death they had invited their fellow countrymen from Germany, and under their Duke

Colgrin were bent upon exterminating the Britons. They had, moreover, entirely subdued that whole part of the island that stretches from the River Humber to the sea of Caithness. Dubricius therefore, sorrowing over the country's calamities, assembled the other prelates, and invested Arthur with the crown of the realm. At that time Arthur was a youth of fifteen years, of a courage and generosity beyond compare, and his inborn goodness lent such grace that he was loved by nearly all the peoples in the land. After he had been invested with the royal insignia, he abided by his ancient custom, and was so prodigal with his bounty that he began to run short of largesse to distribute among the huge multitude of knights that flocked to him. But he who has a generous nature along with prowess, though he might be poor for a time, will not remain so forever. Thus Arthur, who combined valor with largesse, resolved to harry the Saxons, so that with their treasure he might enrich his own retainers. In this he was supported by his own lawful right, seeing that by right he ought to hold the sovereignty of the whole island by virtue of his hereditary claim. Assembling all his youthful retainers, he made first for the city of York. And when Duke Colgrin became aware of this, he gathered his Saxons, Scots, and Picts, and came with a mighty multitude to meet Arthur near the River Douglas, where, by the battle's end, the greater part of both armies had been slain. Nevertheless, Arthur won the day, and after pursuing Colgrin in flight as far as York, besieged him within that city. [Arthur rallies his allies against the Saxons, who are defeated and driven from Britain, as are the Picts and Scots. Arthur rules in peace for twelve years.]

At the end of this time he invited to join him all the bravest men from far-off kingdoms and began to enlarge his household retinue, and to hold such courtly gatherings as led to rivalry among distant peoples, since the noblest in every land, eager to vie with him, would hold himself as nothing unless in the cut of his clothes and the manner of his arms he followed the pattern of Arthur's knights. At last the fame of his bounty and his prowess was on every man's tongue, even to the furthest ends of the earth, and a fear fell upon foreign kings lest he might attack them with arms and they might lose the nations under their dominion. Grievously tormented by these devouring cares, these kings set about repairing their cities and the towers of their cities, and built themselves strongholds in places fitting for defense, so that in case Arthur should lead an expedition against them they might find refuge there. [Arthur determines "to subdue all of Europe" and conquers Norway and parts of Gaul, but is recalled to Britain by news of his nephew Mordred's treason.]

With the summer coming on, at which time Arthur planned to march to Rome, he had begun to climb the mountain passes, when a

message was brought to him that his nephew Mordred, to whom he had committed the care of Britain, had tyrannously and traitorously set the kingdom's crown upon his own head, and had joined himself in unhallowed union with Queen Guinevere, in violation of her earlier marriage. . . . Therefore, as soon as the infamy of this crime reached his ears, Arthur immediately put off the expedition he had planned against Lucius, king of the Romans, and sending Hoel, duke of the Armoricans, with the Gaulish army to restore peace in those parts, he hastened back to Britain with only the island kings and their armies. That most detestable traitor Mordred had sent Cheldric, duke of the Saxons, into Germany to enlist any who would join him and hurry back again with them, such as they might be, as quickly as he could cross the sea. He pledged himself, moreover, by covenant to give Cheldric that part of the island that stretches from the River Humber as far as Scotland, and whatever lands Hengist and Horsa had possessed in Kent in the time of Vortigern. Cheldric, accordingly, obeying his injunctions, had landed with eight hundred ships full of armed pagans, and doing homage to this traitor acknowledged him as his liege lord and king. He had likewise gathered into his company the Scots, Picts and Irish, and anyone else that he knew hated his uncle. All told, they numbered some 800,000 pagans and Christians, and in their company and relying on their assistance he came to meet Arthur on his arrival at Richborough Haven, and in the battle that ensued inflicted terrible slaughter on his men when they had landed. For upon that day Angusel, king of Albany, and Gawain, the king's nephew, fell in battle along with countless others. Eventus, son of Urian his brother, succeeded Angusel in the kingdom, and afterward won great renown for his prowess in those wars. At last, when with great effort they had gained possession of the coast, they avenged themselves on Mordred for this slaughter, and drove him fleeing before them. . . . The perjurer Mordred, however, again collected his men together from all parts, and on the following night marched into Winchester. When this was reported to Queen Guinevere, she was stricken with despair and fled from York to Caerleon, where she planned henceforth to lead a chaste life among the nuns, and took the veil of their order in the church of Julius the Martyr.

But Arthur, burning with still hotter wrath for the loss of so many hundreds of comrades-in-arms, after first giving Christian burial to the slain, on the third day marched on that city and besieged the miscreant who had ensconced himself inside. Still, Mordred was not minded to renounce his plan, but encouraging his adherents by every means he could, marched forth with his troops and arrayed them to meet his uncle. At the beginning of the battle there was extremely great slaughter on both sides, which at last grew heavier on his side

and compelled him to abandon the field shamefully. . . . There still remained to him out of the number of allies I have mentioned sixty thousand men, and these he divided into three battalions, in each of which were 6,666 men-at-arms. . . . Against them Arthur also marshaled his army, which he divided into nine battalions of infantry formed in a square with a right and left wing, and having appointed captains to each, exhorted them to completely destroy these perjurers and thieves, brought from foreign lands into the island at the bidding of a traitor, who were minded to rob them of their holdings and their honors. He told them, moreover, that these motley barbarians from various kingdoms were a pack of raw recruits that knew nothing of the practice of war, and were unable to stand against valiant men like themselves, who were seasoned in so many battles, if they fell upon them hardily and fought manfully. And while the two commanders were still exhorting their men on the one side and the other, the battalions made a sudden rush at each other and began the battle, struggling as if to test which should deal their blows more quickly. At the start, there was such havoc wreaked on both sides, such groaning of the dying, such fury, as would be grievous and burdensome to describe. Everywhere were wounders and wounded, slayers and slain. And after much of the day had been spent in this way, Arthur, with one battalion wherein were 6,666 men, at last charged the company where he knew Mordred was, and hewing a path with their swords, cut clean through it and inflicted a most terrible slaughter. For there fell that accursed traitor and many thousands along with him. . . . Even the renowned King Arthur himself was mortally wounded, and was taken from there to the island of Avalon for his wounds to be healed. There he gave up the crown of Britain to his kinsman, Constantine, son of Cador, duke of Cornwall, in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord 542.

[Gerald of Wales on the Rediscovery of Arthur's Tomb at Glastonbury]

We must not suppress the memory of Arthur, the renowned king of the Britons, who was the patron of the distinguished monastery of Glastonbury, who was in his time an especially magnificent patron and promoter, and whom many histories celebrate. For he loved the church of the Virgin Mary at Glastonbury more than all the rest of the churches in his kingdom, and promoted it above the others with great devotion. . . .

Arthur's body, which tradition claims was almost fantastically tall and invulnerable to death, was carried a long way off as if by means of the spirit, and was discovered in our time at Glastonbury. It was

found between two pyramids which formerly stood in the monks' holy cemetery, concealed deeply in the earth under a hollow oak tree, its presence announced by means of wonderful and almost miraculous signs, and then translated to the church and fittingly and with great honor laid in a marble tomb. And a leaden cross was placed below the tomb, not above it as is done in our time, but rather affixed lower down. We have also seen and touched its letters (which are carved into the stone rather than standing out or projecting forth), which read: "Here in the island of Avalon lies buried the renowned King Arthur with Guinevere, his second wife."

Many noteworthy things have, however, happened here; for he had had two wives, of which the last one was buried with him at the same time, and the bones of that woman were discovered at the same time along with those of the man, but they were nevertheless distinct from one another. . . . Evidence about the body was discovered by the monks among their writings, as well as from the letters carved upon the pyramids (though these were very much effaced by their great age), and through the visions and revelations of good and pious men, but most evidently from King Henry II of England, who revealed to the monks that, as he had heard from a singer of ancient British history, they would discover the body deep in the earth, at a depth of at least sixteen feet, not in a stone tomb but in a hollow oak tree. After [Arthur's] death, his body was buried so deeply so that it could not be found by the Saxons then occupying the island, a people he had fought with such a great effort and nearly destroyed while he lived. For all this is declared by the letters engraved inside the cross affixed to the stone tomb, so that its contents might be hidden in that time and later in our time be made known in that place. . . .

It should be known that the bones of Arthur's body were found to be so large that in that place these words of the poet seemed to be fulfilled: "He will wonder at huge bones in the opened grave (Virgil, *Georgics*, 1.497)." For, as the abbot showed us, that man's shin-bone, when placed beside the leg of the tallest man there, and affixed in the earth next to his foot, extended past his knee by a length of three fingers. The skull was so large and wide that it was almost a marvel or wonder, since the spaces between the eyes and eyebrows were as wide as the palm of a hand. On the skull were to be seen ten wounds or more, which came together in a solid scar. One of these was greater than the rest; it had left a great cleft in the bone and it alone would seem to have been fatal.

Questions: What qualities does Geoffrey of Monmouth admire in Arthur? What might we infer from Geoffrey about twelfth-century

models of kingship? Given the great popularity in Wales of legends promising Arthur's return from Avalon, what is the significance of the discovery of the king's body at Glastonbury? Why would the monks of Glastonbury wish to promote these relics?

40. Town Charters

Perhaps nothing had as wide-ranging an influence on twelfth-century society and culture as the growth of towns and cities, the result of a booming economy and growing population. One aspect of this was the granting of charters that guaranteed specific rights and freedoms to urban populations. Charters were granted by the king or by a lord who had rights over the town; the latter could be either a noble or a bishop.

Source: charter of Henry I, trans. W.d.G. Birch, *The Historical Charters and Constitutional Documents of the City of London* (London: Whiting & Company, 1884), pp. 3–4, revised; charters of Henry II and Thurstan, trans. E.P. Cheyney, *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, 1st ser. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Department of History, 1896), vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 7–11, revised.

Henry I to London [early twelfth century]

Henry, by the grace of God, king of England, to the archbishop of Canterbury, and to the bishops and abbots, earls and barons, justices and sheriffs, and to all his faithful subjects of England, French and English, greeting.

Know that I have granted to my citizens of London, to hold [the shire of] Middlesex to farm [to take the profits and pay the king a set annual income] for £300 upon account, to them and their heirs, so that the said citizens shall appoint as sheriff whomever they wish for themselves; and shall appoint whomever, or one of themselves if they wish, for hearing the pleas of the crown, and the pleadings of the same, and none other shall be justice over the same men of London; and the citizens of London shall not plead outside the walls of London for any plea [in any legal case]. And they shall be free from scot and lot and danegeld [all customary royal taxes], and of all murder [fines]; and none of them shall [have to] wage battle. And if any one of the citizens shall be impleaded [taken to court] concerning the pleas of the crown, the man of London shall discharge himself by his oath, which shall be adjudged within the city. And no one shall lodge within the walls, neither people of my household, nor any other, and no lodging shall be taken by force.

And all the men of London and all their goods shall be acquitted and free, throughout England, and the ports of the sea, of and from all toll and passage and lestage [charges for goods put on a ship], also all other customs charges; and the churches and barons and citizens [of London] shall and may peaceably and quietly have and hold their sokes [jurisdictions] with all their customs, so that the strangers that shall be lodged in the sokes shall give custom to none but to him to whom the soke belongs, or to his officer, whom he shall put there. And a man of London shall not be adjudged in amercements [fines] of more than 100s. (I speak of the pleas which appertain to money); and further there shall be no more [penalties for] miskenning [procedural errors] in the hustings [London's civil court], nor in the folkmote [an assembly], nor in other pleas within the city; and the hustings may sit once in a week, that is to say, on Monday. And I will cause my citizens to have their lands, promises, bonds, and debts, within the city and outside it; and I will do them right by the law of the city, concerning the lands of which they shall complain to me.

And if anyone shall take toll or custom from any citizen of London, the citizens of London in the city shall take from the borough or town, where toll or custom was so taken, as much as the man of London gave for toll, and as he received damage thereby. And all debtors who owe debts to the citizens of London shall pay them in London, or else discharge themselves in London, that they owe none; but if they will not pay the same, nor come to clear themselves that they owe none, the citizens of London, to whom the debts shall be due, may take their goods in the city of London, from the borough or town, or from the county where the debtor remains. And all citizens of London may have their chases [hunting land] to hunt, as well and fully as their ancestors have had, that is to say, in Chiltre, and in Middlesex and Surrey.

Witness the bishop of Winchester, and Robert son of Richier, and Hugh Bigod, and Alured of Toteneys, and William of Alba Spina and Hubert, the king's chamberlain, and William de Montfichet, and Hangulf de Taney, and John Bellet, and Robert son of Siward. At Westminster.

Archbishop Thurstan of York to Beverly [before 1140]

Thurstan, by the grace of God, archbishop of York, to all the faithful in Christ, both present and to come, greeting and God's benediction and his own. Let it be known to you that I have given and conceded, and by the advice of the chapter of York and of Beverly and by the advice of my barons I have confirmed by my charter to the men of

Beverly all their liberties with the same laws which the men of York have in their city. Moreover, let it not be hidden from you that lord Henry [I] our king has conceded to us the power of doing this of his own good will, and by his charter has confirmed our statutes and our laws according to the form of the laws of the burgesses of York, saving the dignity and honor of God and Saint John, and of us and of the canons, in order that he might thus increase the benefactions of his predecessors, and promote them by all these free customs.

I will that my burgesses of Beverly shall have their guildhall, which I give to them and concede in order that they may there determine upon their statutes to the honor of God and of Saint John and of the canons [the priests of Beverly Minster], and to the advantage of the whole body of citizens, being enfranchised by the same law as the men of York in their hanse house [the building where the York merchants met]. I give up to them, moreover, their toll forever for [a payment of] 18 marks a year; except in those feasts in which toll belongs to us and to the canons, that is to say, in the feast of Saint John the Confessor, on [6] May, in the feast of the translation of Saint John [of Beverly, on 25 October], and on the day of the birth of Saint John the Baptist [24 June]; and on these festivals I have made all the burgesses of Beverly free and released from all toll. By the testimony of this charter, moreover, I have conceded to the same burgesses as free entrance and departure within and outside the town, in plain and wood and marsh, in roads and byways, and in other suitable places, except in meadows and grainfields, as anyone can ever concede and confirm them most freely and broadly; and know that they are as free and released from all toll through the whole of Yorkshire, as the men of York are. And I will that whosoever opposes this may be accursed, as the custom of the church of Saint John [of Beverly] asserts and as it has been decreed in the church of Saint John.

These are witness: Geoffrey Murdoc, Nigel Fossard, Alan de Percy, Walter Spec, Eustace son of John, Thomas the reeve, Thurstan the archdeacon, Herbert the chamberlain, William son of Toole, and William of Bath, in the presence of the whole household of the archbishop, clerical and lay, in York.

Questions: What rights and freedoms do the townspeople want? Why? What do we learn about life in the towns? What economic ideas are evident in the charters? Why did the lords grant these privileges?

41. William fitzStephen's Description of London

In his biography of his master Thomas Becket, the clerk William fitzStephen included a famous description of the saint's birthplace, London. While fitzStephen is clearly concerned to show off his learning (note the many quotes, most from classical authors such as Virgil, with which he peppers his prose), he also gives us a rare eyewitness view of a twelfth-century city. When fitzStephen wrote (ca 1180), London was a bustling hub of commercial activity and royal administration with a population of perhaps 20,000 (quite large by contemporary standards).

Source: trans. H.E. Butler, *Norman London: An Essay*, by F.M. Stenton (London: The Historical Association, 1934), pp. 26–32; revised.

Among the noble cities of the world that are celebrated by fame, the city of London, seat of the monarchy of England, is one that spreads its fame wider, sends its wealth and wares further, and lifts its head higher than all others. It is blessed in the wholesomeness of its air, in its reverence for the Christian faith, in the strength of its bulwarks, the nature of its situation, the honor of its citizens, and the chastity of its matrons. It is likewise most merry in its sports and fruitful of noble men. Of these things it is my pleasure to treat, each in its own place. . . .

In the church of Saint Paul is the episcopal see. Once it was the metropolitan [the seat of an archbishop], and it is thought that it will be so again, if the citizens return to the island, unless perchance the archiepiscopal title of the blessed martyr Thomas and the presence of his body preserve that honor for all time at Canterbury, where it now resides. . . . Also, as concerns Christian worship, there are both in London and the suburbs thirteen greater conventual churches, and 126 lesser parochial ones.

On the east stands the palatine citadel [the Tower of London], exceedingly great and strong, whose walls and bailey rise from very deep foundations, their mortar being mixed with the blood of beasts. On the west are two strongly fortified castles, while thence there runs continuously a great wall and high, with seven double gates, and with towers along the north at intervals. On the south, London was once walled and towered in like fashion, but the Thames, that mighty river, teeming with fish, which runs on that side with the sea's ebb and flow, has in course of time washed away those bulwarks, undermined and cast them down. Also upstream to the west the royal palace rises high above the river, a building beyond compare, with an outwork and bastions, two miles from the city and joined to it by a populous suburb.

On all sides, beyond the houses, lie the gardens of the citizens that dwell in the suburbs, planted with trees, spacious and fair, adjoining one another.

On the north are pasture lands and a pleasant space of flat meadows, intersected by running waters, which turn revolving mill-wheels with merry din. Hard by there stretches a great forest with wooded glades and lairs of wild beasts, deer both red and fallow, wild boars and bulls. . . .

This city wins honor by its men and glory by its arms and has a multitude of inhabitants, so that at the time of the calamitous wars of King Stephen's reign the men going forth from it to be mustered were reckoned 20,000 armed horsemen and 60,000 footsoldiers. The citizens of London are everywhere regarded as illustrious and renowned beyond those of all other cities for the elegance of their fine manner, raiment, and table. . . .

In London the three principal churches, to wit the episcopal see of the church of Saint Paul, the church of the Holy Trinity, and the church of Saint Martin, have famous schools by privilege and in virtue of their ancient dignity. But through the personal favor of some one or more of those learned men who are known and eminent in the study of philosophy there are other schools licensed by special grace and permission. On holy days the masters of the schools assemble their scholars at the churches whose feast day it is. The scholars dispute, some in demonstrative rhetoric, others in dialectic. . . . Boys of different schools strive one against another in verse or contend concerning the principles of the art of grammar or the rules governing the use of past or future tenses. There are others who employ the old wit of the cross-roads in epigrams, rhymes and meter; with "Fescennine License" [bawdy verses], they lacerate their comrades outspokenly, though mentioning no names; they hurl "abuse and gibes" they touch the foibles of their comrades, perchance even of their elders with Socratic wit. . . .

Those that ply their several trades, the sellers of every thing, those who hire out their labor are found every morning each in their separate quarters and each engaged upon his own particular task. Moreover there is in London upon the river's bank, amid the wine that is sold from ships and winecellars, a public cook-shop. There daily, according to the season, you may find viands, dishes roasted, fried and boiled, fish great and small, the coarser flesh for the poor, the more delicate for the rich, such as venison and birds both big and little. If friends, weary with travel, should of a sudden come to any of the citizens, and it is not their pleasure to wait fasting till fresh food is

bought and cooked and “till servants bring water for hands and bread,” they hasten to the riverbank, where all desirable things are ready at hand. . . .

In the suburb immediately outside one of the gates there is a smooth field, both in fact and in name [later known as Smithfield]. On every sixth day of the week, unless it be a major feast day on which solemn rites are prescribed, there is a much frequented show of fine horses for sale. All the earls, barons and knights who are in the city come there, along with many of the citizens, whether to look on or buy. It is a joy to see the ambling palfreys, their skin full of juice, their coats glistening, as they pace softly, alternately raising and putting down the feet on one side together; next to see the horses that best befit esquires, moving more roughly, yet nimbly, as they raise and set down the opposite feet, fore and hind, first on one side and then on the other; then the younger colts of high breeding, unbroken and “high-stepping with elastic tread,” and after them the costly destriers [war-horses] of graceful form and goodly stature, “with quivering ears, high necks and plump buttocks.” . . .

In another place apart stand the wares of country-folk, instruments of agriculture, long-flanked swine, cows with swollen udders, and “woolly flocks and bodies huge of kine.” Mares stand there, well-suited for plows, sledges and two-horsed carts; the bellies of some are big with young; around others move their offspring, new-born, sprightly foals, their inseparable followers.

To this city, from every nation that is under heaven, merchants rejoice to bring their trade in ships.

> Gold from Arabia, from Sabaea spice
> And incense; from the Scythians
> arms of steel
> Well-tempered; oil from the rich
> groves of palm
> That spring from the fat lands of
> Babylon;
> Fine gems from the Nile, from China
> crimson silks;
> French wines; and sable, vair and
> miniver
> From the far lands where Russ and
> Norseman dwell.

London, as the chroniclers have shown, is far older than Rome. For, owing its birth to the same Trojan ancestors, it was founded by Brutus before Rome was founded by Romulus and Remus. Wherefore

they both still use the ancient laws and like institutions. London, like Rome, is divided into wards. In place of consuls it has sheriffs every year; its senatorial order and lesser magistrates; sewers and conduits in its streets, and for the pleading of diverse causes, demonstrative, deliberative, and judicial, it has its proper places, its separate courts. It has also its assemblies on appointed days. I do not think there is any city deserving of greater approval for its custom in respect of church-going, honor paid to the ordinances of God, keeping of feast days, giving of alms, entertainment of strangers, ratifying of betrothals, contracts of marriage, celebration of nuptials, furnishing of banquets, cheering of guests, and likewise for their care in regard to the rites of funeral and the burial of the dead. The only plagues of London are the immoderate drinking of fools and the frequency of fires. . . .

Furthermore, let us consider also the sports of the city, since it is not fitting that a city should only be useful and sober, unless it also be pleasant and merry. . . .

London in place of shows in the theatre and stage-plays has holier plays wherein are shown forth the miracles wrought by holy confessors or the sufferings which glorified the constancy of martyrs.

Moreover, each year upon the day called Carnival—to begin with the sports of boys (for we were all boys once)—boys from the schools bring fighting-cocks to their masters, and the whole morning is given up to boyish sport; for they have a holiday in the schools so that they may watch their cocks do battle. After dinner all the youth of the city goes out into the fields to a much-frequented game of ball. The scholars of each school have their own ball, and almost all the workers of each trade have theirs also in their hands. Elder men and fathers and rich citizens come on horseback to watch the contests of their juniors, and after their fashion are young again with the young. . . .

Every Sunday in Lent after dinner a “fresh swarm of young gentles” goes forth on war-horses, “steeds skilled in the contest,” of which each is “apt and schooled to wheel in circles round.” From the gates burst forth in throngs the lay sons of citizens, armed with lance and shield, the younger with shafts forked at the end, but with steel point removed. “They wake war’s semblance” and in play exercise their skill at arms. . . .

At the feast of Easter they make sport with naval tournaments, as it were. For a shield being strongly bound to a stout pole in midstream, a small vessel, swiftly driven on by many an oar and by the river’s flow, carries a youth standing at the prow, who is to strike the shield with his lance. If he break the lance by striking the shield and keep his

feet unshaken, he has achieved his purpose and fulfilled his desire. If, however, he strike it strongly without splintering his lance, he is thrown into the rushing river, and the boat of its own speed passes him by. . . . On the bridge and the galleries above the river are spectators of the sport "ready to laugh their fill."

On feast days throughout the summer the youths exercise themselves in leaping, archery and wrestling, putting the stone, and throwing the thonged javelin beyond a mark, and fighting with sword and buckler. . . .

In winter on almost every feast-day before dinner either foaming boars and hogs, armed with "tusks lightning-swift," themselves soon to be bacon, fight for their lives, or else fat bulls with butting horns, or huge bears, do combat to the death against hounds loosed upon them.

When the great marsh that washes the northern walls of the city is frozen, dense throngs of youths go forth to disport themselves upon the ice. Some, gathering speed by a run, glide sidelong, with feet set well apart, over a vast space of ice. Others make themselves seats of ice like millstones and are dragged along by a number who run before them holding hands. Sometimes they slip owing to the greatness of their speed and fall, every one of them, upon their faces. Others there are, more skilled to sport upon the ice, who fit to their feet the shinbones of beasts, lashing them beneath their ankles, and with iron-shod poles in their hands they strike occasionally against the ice and are borne along swift as a bird in flight or a bolt shot from a mangonel. . . .

Questions: How might fitzStephen's purpose in writing have colored his presentation of the city? What do we learn about London's topography, economy, and daily life in the city? Which urban features does the author find particularly impressive?

42. Thomas of Monmouth's *Life of Saint William of Norwich*

By the mid-twelfth century, Jewish communities could be found in most larger English towns. In towns such as Norwich, where a Jewish community was in residence by 1135, the Jews often drew the resentment of local Christians because they were subject only to the crown and its representatives, and thus independent of local governments. The story excerpted here, based on events in 1144 and recorded shortly afterward by a local monk, is an early example of the myth of Jews ritually slaughtering Christian children; in later years many towns developed their own child martyr stories in imitation of this

one. There is no factual basis for this Christian myth, but the story is significant for what it tells us about Christian attitudes toward Jews and for its incidental details about urban life.

Source: trans. A. Jessopp and M.R. James, *The Life and Miracles of St William of Norwich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896), pp. 10, 12–23, 35–37, 41–48; revised.

Book I

1. . . . The mercy of the divine goodness desiring to display itself to the parts near Norwich, or rather to the whole of England, and to give it in these new times a new patron, granted that a boy should be conceived in his mother's womb without her knowing that he was to be numbered among illustrious martyrs and worthy to be honored among all the army of the saints, and moreover brought it about that he should grow up little by little as a fragrant rose from the thorns.

His father was a certain Wenstan by name. His mother was called Elviva, and they passed their lives as honest people in the country, being somewhat well supplied with the necessaries of life and something more. Let it not seem absurd to anyone that a boy of such sanctity and destined for such honor should by God's will be born from lowly parents, when it is certain that he himself was pleased to be born from among the poor. . . .

2. Concerning his birth and infancy.

Some time having elapsed and the day having arrived for his bringing forth, a son was born to the woman, and his name was called William. But he was born on the day of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that is on Candlemas [2 February]. Perhaps, too, by this is indicated how great the purity and sanctity of the child would be, and that he would greatly love candles and their brightness. . . .

The mother, as she loved her child exceedingly, so did she educate him with exceeding care, and by carefully educating him she brought him up from his infancy to the years of intelligent boyhood. When he was but seven years old—as I learnt from the mother's narrative—he became so devoted to abstinence that, though his elder brothers did not fast, he himself fasted on three days of the week—to wit the second, fourth and sixth days—and also celebrated the vigils of the apostles and of other saints that were announced to the people by devout fasting. And as his zeal increased, he used to pass many days content with nothing but bread and water. His whole inner man overflowing with piety, whatever he could save from his own portion of food or extort from his mother by his entreaties, he used to bestow upon the poor, sometimes openly and sometimes secretly. . . . He was

a most joyful attendant at church; he used to learn his letters and the psalms and prayers, and all the things of God he treated with the greatest reverence. . . .

3. How he was accustomed to resort to the Jews, and having been rebuked by his own people for doing so, withdrew himself from them.

When, therefore, he was flourishing in blessed boyhood, and had reached his eighth year, he was entrusted to the skinners to be taught their craft. Gifted with a teachable disposition and bringing industry to bear upon it, in a short time he far surpassed lads of his own age in the aforesaid craft, and he equaled some who had been his teachers. So leaving the country, by the drawing of a divine attraction he went to the city and lodged with a very famous master of that craft, and some time passed away. He was seldom in the country, but was occupied in the city and sedulously gave himself to the practice of his craft, and thus reached his twelfth year.

Now, while he was staying in Norwich, the Jews who were settled there and required their cloaks or their robes or other garments (whether pledged to them, or their own property) to be repaired, preferred him before all other skinners. For they esteemed him to be especially fit for their work, either because they had learned that he was guileless and skilful, or because, attracted to him by their avarice, they thought they could bargain with him for a lower price. Or, as I rather believe, because by the ordering of divine providence he had been predestined to martyrdom from the beginning of time, and gradually, step by step, was drawn on, and chosen to be made a mockery of and to be put to death by the Jews, in scorn of the Lord's passion. . . . For I have learned from certain Jews, who were afterward converted to the Christian faith, how at that time they had planned to do this very thing with some Christian, and in order to carry out their malignant purpose, at the beginning of Lent they had chosen the boy William, being twelve years of age and a boy of unusual innocence. So it came to pass that when the holy boy, ignorant of the treachery that had been planned, had frequent dealings with the Jews, he was taken to task by Godwin the priest, who was married to the boy's aunt, and by a certain Wulward with whom he lodged, and he was prohibited from going among them any more. But the Jews, annoyed at the thwarting of their designs, tried with all their might to patch up a new scheme of wickedness. . . . Accordingly, collecting all the cunning of their crafty plots, they found a man—I am not sure whether he was a Christian or a Jew—who was a most treacherous fellow and just the right person to carry out their execrable crime, and with all haste—for their Passover was coming on in three days—they sent him to find and bring back with him the victim who, as I said before, had slipped out of their hands.

4. How he was seduced by the Jews' messenger.

At dawn on the Monday after Palm Sunday, that detestable messenger of the Jews set out to execute the business that was committed to him, and at last he found the boy William, after searching for him with very great care. When he was found, he deceived him with cunning wordy tricks and lying promises. For he pretended that he was the cook of William, archdeacon of Norwich, and that he wished to have him as a helper in the kitchen, where if he should continue steadily with him, he would receive many advantages from his situation. The simple boy was deceived, and trusted himself to the man; but, wishing to have his mother's favorable consent—for his father had died by this time—he started off with the fellow to find her. When they had come to where she was, the boy told her the cause of his errand, and the traitor, according to the tenor of his previous offer, cast the net of his treachery. So by many promises that son of perdition easily prevailed upon the boy's mind with his tempting offer. Yet at first he could not at all gain the mother's consent; but when the scoundrel persisted, the innocent boy agreed though his mother, moved by presentiment, resisted, and in her motherly affection [felt] some fear for her son. . . .

So the traitor took three shillings from his purse with the intention of getting the better of the mother's fancy and bending the fickle stubbornness of a fickle woman, seduced by the glitter of money to the lust of gain. Thus the money was offered as the price of the innocent's service, or rather in truth as the price of his blood. . . . So the mother's mind was cruelly vanquished by [the coins], even though the maternal affection only slowly gave way under the temptation and, seduced at last by the shining pieces of silver, she was the victim of her covetousness, . . . and the boy William was given up to the betrayer.

5. How on his going to the Jews he was taken, mocked, and slain.

In the morning, accordingly, that traitor, the imitator in almost everything of the traitor Judas, returned to Norwich with the boy, and as he was passing by the house of the boy's aunt he went in with him and said that the mother had entrusted the boy to himself, and then he went out again hastily. But the boy's aunt said quickly to her daughter, "Follow them at once, and take care to find out where that man is leading the boy." Thus the girl ran out to explore the way they were going. She followed them at a distance as they turned about through some private alleys, and at last she saw them entering cautiously into the house of a certain Jew, and immediately after she heard the door shut. When she saw this, she went back to her mother and told her what she had seen.

Then the boy, like an innocent lamb, was led to the slaughter. He was treated kindly by the Jews at first, and, ignorant of what was being prepared for him, he was kept till the morrow. But on the next day, which in that year was their Passover, after the singing of the hymns appointed for the day in the synagogue, the chief men of the Jews assembled in the house of the aforesaid Jew suddenly seized of the boy William as he was having his dinner, fearing no treachery, and ill-treated him in various horrible ways. [There follows a detailed description of the tortures the Jews inflict on William, culminating in a crucifixion meant to replicate the final suffering of Christ.]

Thus then the glorious boy and martyr of Christ, William, dying the death of time in reproach of the Lord's death, but crowned with the blood of a glorious martyrdom, entered into the kingdom of glory on high to live forever. His soul rejoices blissfully in heaven among the bright hosts of the saints, and his body by the omnipotence of the divine mercy works miracles upon earth. [The murderers then dumped William's body in the woods on Good Friday and bribed the sheriff to keep their secret, but the body was found with miraculous assistance. The finders did not immediately bury it.]

12. How he was buried in the wood.

So the business of burying him was put off. But in the meantime, by one man after another telling others their several versions of the story, the rumor spread in all directions, and when it reached the city it struck the hearts of all who heard it with exceeding horror. The city was stirred with a strange excitement, and the streets were crowded with people making a disturbance. . . . A divine impulse drawing them on, they rushed in crowds to the wood to see the sight. What they sought they found, and, when they detected the marks of the torture in the body, and carefully examined the method of the act, some suspected that the Jews were not guiltless of the deed; but some, led on by what was really a divine discernment, protested that it was so. . . .

And so the earnestness of their devout fervor was urging all to destroy the Jews, and they would there and then have laid hands upon them, but, restrained by fear of the sheriff John they kept quiet for awhile. . . .

But this fact I think ought to be mentioned, that while the body was being carried by the hands of those who were going to bury it, suddenly such a fragrant perfume filled the nostrils of the bystanders as if there had been growing there a great mass of sweet-smelling herbs and flowers. . . .

15. Concerning the lamentations of his mother.

Just at this time as the report was spreading, the story of her son's

murder reached the ears of his mother who, naturally overwhelmed by the sad tidings, straightway swooned away as if she were dead. Recovering herself after a while, however, without delay she hastened to Norwich to enquire into the truth of the matter. But when she learned by the relation of many people that her son was dead and was buried in the wood, with torn hair and clapping of hands she immediately ran from one to another, weeping and wailing through the streets like a mad woman. At last, going to the house of her sister whom I mentioned before and enquiring first of the priest Godwin, then of her sister, she could learn no more about the circumstances and the truth than that he had been slain in an extraordinary way. But from many probable indications and conclusions, she was convinced that they were not Christians but Jews who had dared to do the deed. . . . [S]he went through the streets and open places and, carried along by her motherly distress, she kept calling upon everybody with dreadful screams, protesting that the Jews had seduced and stolen away her son from her and killed him. This conduct very greatly worked upon the minds of the populace to accept the truth, and so everybody began to cry out with one voice that all the Jews ought to be utterly destroyed as constant enemies of the Christian name and the Christian religion.

16. How the priest Godwin accused the Jews and offered to prove by ordeal that they were guilty of the death of the boy William.

When some days had passed, the day for holding the synod drew near, and according to custom Bishop Eborard presided. The sermon having been preached, the aforesaid priest Godwin rose, saying that he was about to bring to the ears of the bishop and his brother priests a distressing complaint and one which had not been heard of in the present time. Wherefore, silence having been enjoined upon all, he began in the following manner:

"Very Reverend Lord and Father and Bishop—By that goodness of yours which has up to now been so well known, and which I trust may continue to be so esteemed for all time, I beg you to incline your ears graciously to the words of our complaint. . . . Truly I have come forward to plead not so much a private or domestic cause as to make known to you an outrage which has been done to the whole Christian community. Indeed, I think it is not unknown to your fathership, very reverend prelate, nor do I think it is a secret to most of you, my dear brethren, that a certain boy—a very little boy, and a harmless innocent too—was treated in the most horrible manner in Passion Week, was found in a wood, and up to this time has been without Christian burial. He was, indeed, a cousin of my own children, and because of the tie of kindred which united us he was very dear to me. Wherefore, when I lay my complaint about his death before you all, I

can hardly restrain my eyes from weeping. To begin with, I hold all Christians excused as guiltless from any complicity in so execrable a murder. But in the second place, I accuse the Jews, the enemies of the Christian name, as the doers of this deed and the shedders of innocent blood. Thirdly, I am ready to prove the truth of my words at such time and place and by such proof as is allowed me by Christian law. . . ."

Accordingly, while all were amazed and disturbed at what had occurred, the prelate, very much moved at the atrocity of the deed, and actuated by his zeal for justice, replied as follows:

"Since what you affirm to be certain is so far clearly uncertain to us, we shall at any rate take care to arrive at a certain knowledge of this business. And if, indeed, it shall be established to be as you maintain, be assured that the rigor of our justice shall in no way be found wanting. But since it is not seemly that a just judge should pronounce upon those who are absent and unheard, let the Jews be summoned and have a hearing tomorrow. Then, if they be convicted, let them receive the punishment they deserve."

Thus this business was put off till the next day, and . . . all dispersed, intending to return next morning. But by order of the bishop the dean of Norwich on the same day summoned the Jews to appear, and ordered them to attend to answer on the morrow before the synod regarding so important a matter.

The Jews were greatly disturbed and ran to the sheriff, John, as their only refuge, seeking help and counsel in so difficult a cause, since by trusting to his patronage they had often escaped many dangers. So John, having taken counsel and being one who was not ignorant of the truth, did not allow the Jews to come to the synod on the morrow, and indeed he gave notice by his servants to the bishop that he had nothing to do with the Jews, and that in the absence of the king the Jews should make no answer to such inventions of the Christians. . . .

Accordingly, it was determined by common consent that notice should be given to John that he should not protect the Jews against God, and to the Jews that peremptory sentence would be passed upon them, and that unless they at once came to purge themselves they must understand that without doubt they would be exterminated.

Of course John, moved by these words, came without delay, and the Jews with him. . . . By the advice of the sheriff, the Jews denied the charge brought against them; but as to the ordeal proposed, they asked for some small delay for deliberating. . . . After seeking some way of compromise, with a great deal of discussion, and after dealing with each alternative on its merits, they found no safe escape out of so great a difficulty except by obtaining some truce and delay. If they

could obtain that, they hoped they could easily extort from the king the favor which might be bought for money, of getting a chance of arguing their case, and so utterly put an end to the rumor of the crime laid to their charge.

When the greatest part of the day had been spent in this kind of disputing, at last they sent to the bishop asking that a respite of some sort be granted to them. That being peremptorily denied them, the sheriff and the Jews, without asking for leave to depart as is the usual custom, went their way. But because it was not safe for them to remain outside, the sheriff protected them within the defenses of the castle until, their security having been assured to them by a royal edict, they might be safe for the future and out of harm's way. . . .

Questions: What elements of Christian attitudes toward Jews can be distinguished here? Why were the Jews vulnerable to such charges? How are the various authorities portrayed? What was the sheriff's role? How are William's relatives depicted?

43. Reginald of Durham's *Life of Saint Godric, Hermit of Finchale*

Medieval hagiographies, or saints' lives, share similarities across the genre, and many of these standard elements are present in the lives of Edward the Confessor, Thomas Becket, and William of Norwich (docs. 18, 35, and 42). But the biography of Godric of Finchale (ca 1065–1170), written by his close associate, the monk Reginald of Durham, recounts a life rather different from that of the typical medieval saint, and does so in an unusual way, being full of circumstantial and lively detail about Godric's life as a merchant before his religious conversion.

Source: trans. G.G. Coulton, *Social Life in Britain from the Conquest to the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), pp. 415–20.

This holy man's father was named Ailward, and his mother Edwenna; both of slight rank and wealth, but abundant in righteousness and virtue. They were born in Norfolk, and had long lived in the township called Walpole. . . . After the boy had passed his childish years quietly at home, then, as he grew to manhood, he began to follow more prudent ways of life, and to learn carefully and persistently the teachings of worldly forethought. Thus he chose not to follow the life of a farmer, but rather to study, learn, and exercise the rudiments of more subtle conceptions. For this reason, aspiring to the merchant's trade, he began to follow the chapman's way of life, first

learning how to gain in small bargains and things of insignificant price; then, while yet a youth, his mind advanced little by little to buy and sell and gain from things of greater expense. For, in his beginnings, he was accustomed to wander with small wares around the villages and farmsteads of his own neighborhood; but over time he gradually associated himself by compact with city merchants. Hence, within a brief period, the youth who had trudged for many weary hours from village to village, from farm to farm, so profited by his increased age and wisdom as to travel with associates of his own age through towns and boroughs, fortresses, and cities, to fairs and to all the various booths of the marketplace, in pursuit of public bargaining. . . .

As he then dwelled by the seashore, he went down one day to the strand to seek some means of livelihood. . . . The place is called Wellstream, hard by the town of Spalding; there, when the tide was out, the country folk used to scour and explore the stretches of sand, discovering and converting to their own use whatever wreckage or flotsam the sea might have brought to shore; in this way they sometimes get wealth, since they are free to carry off whatsoever goods or commodities they find by the shore. The saint, then, inspired by such hopes, roamed one day over these stretches of shore; and, finding nothing at first, he followed on and on to a distance of three miles, where he found three porpoises lying high and dry, either cast upon the sands by the waves or left there by the ebb tide. Two were still alive and struggling: the third, in the midst, was dead or dying. Moved with pity, he left the living untouched, cut a portion from the dead fish, and began carrying this away upon his back. But the tide soon began to flow; and Godric, halting under his burden, was overtaken by the waves. First they wet his feet, then his legs, then his upper body . . . [until] at length, the waters even covered his head, yet Godric, strong in faith, bore his burden onward even under the waves, until, by God's help, he struggled out upon the very shore from which he had gone forth. Then, bringing the fish to his parents, he told them the whole tale, and exhorted them to declare the glory of God.

Yet in all things he walked with simplicity; so far as he yet knew how, it was ever his pleasure to follow in the footsteps of the truth. For, having learned the Lord's Prayer and the Creed from his very cradle, he often turned them over in his mind, even as he went alone on his longer journeys; and, in so far as the truth was revealed to his mind, he clung to it most devoutly in all his thoughts concerning God. At first, he lived as a chapman for four years in Lincolnshire, going on foot and carrying the smallest wares; then he traveled abroad, first to Saint Andrews in Scotland and then for the first time to Rome. On his

return, having formed a familiar friendship with certain other young men eager for merchandise, he began to launch upon bolder courses, and to go frequently by sea to foreign lands. Thus, sailing often between Scotland and England, he traded in many diverse wares and learned much worldly wisdom through these occupations. . . . Aspiring ever higher and higher, and yearning upward with his whole heart, at length his great labors and cares bore much fruit in worldly gains. For he labored not only as a merchant but also as a shipman . . . to Denmark and Flanders and Scotland; in all these lands he found certain rare, and therefore more precious, wares, which he carried to other places where he knew them to be less familiar, and coveted by the inhabitants beyond the price of gold itself. . . . Hence he made great profit in all his bargains, and gathered much wealth in the sweat of his brow; for he sold dear in one place the wares which he had bought elsewhere at a small price.

He purchased half of a merchant ship with certain of his trading partners, and again by his prudence he bought the fourth part of another ship. At length, by his skill in navigation, in which he excelled all his fellows, he earned promotion to the post of steersman. . . . He knew, from the aspect of sea and stars, how to foretell fair or foul weather. In his various voyages he visited the shrines of many saints, to whose protection he was accustomed to commend himself most devoutly, but more especially the church of Saint Andrew in Scotland, where he most frequently made and paid his vows. On the way there, he often stopped at the island of Lindisfarne, where Saint Cuthbert had been bishop, and at the Isle of Farne, where that saint had lived as an anchorite, and where Saint Godric (as he himself would tell afterward) would meditate on the saint's life with abundant tears. In this way he began to yearn for solitude, and to hold his merchandise in less esteem than before. . . .

After he had lived sixteen years as a merchant, he began to think of spending on charity, to God's honor and service, the goods he had so laboriously acquired. He therefore took the cross as a pilgrim to Jerusalem, and, having visited the Holy Sepulcher, came back to England by way of Saint James [of Compostella, in Spain]. Not long afterward he became steward to a certain rich man of his own country, and was entrusted with the care of his whole house and household. But certain of the younger household were men of iniquity, who stole their neighbors' cattle and thus held luxurious feasts which Godric, in his ignorance, sometimes attended. Afterward, discovering the truth, he rebuked and admonished them to cease, but they took no account of his warnings; wherefore he concealed not their iniquity, but disclosed it to the lord of the household, who, however, slighted his advice. For this reason he begged to be

dismissed and went on a pilgrimage, first to Saint Gilles and from there to Rome, the abode of the apostles, that thus he might knowingly pay the penalty for those misdeeds in which he had ignorantly taken part. . . .

On his return from Rome, he lived for a while in his father's house, until, inflamed again with holy zeal, he proposed to revisit the abode of the apostles and made his desire known to his parents. Not only did they approve his purpose, but his mother sought his permission to keep him company on this pilgrimage; this he gladly granted, and willingly paid her every filial service that was her due. They came therefore to London, and they had scarcely departed from that city when his mother took off her shoes, going thus barefooted to Rome and so back to London. Godric, humbly serving his parent, used to bear her on his shoulders. . . .

Godric, when he had restored his mother safe to his father's arms, remained but a brief while at home; for he was now already firmly resolved to give himself over entirely to God's service. And so, in order to follow Christ more freely, he sold all his possessions and distributed them among the poor. Then, telling his parents of this purpose and receiving their blessing, he went forth to no certain abode, but wherever the Lord should deign to lead him; for above all things he coveted the life of a hermit. . . . [Eventually he settled at Finchale and gained renown as a hermit.]

Questions: What does the Life *tell us about economic life in the twelfth century? What are the stages of Godric's spiritual development? Compare his vocation with that of Henry of Essex (doc. 37).*

44. *The History of William Marshal*

William Marshal's contemporaries admired him enormously, for his military prowess and reputation as a dashing young man; for his successful career in royal politics, which earned him an earldom (upon his marriage to the heiress of Pembroke, he was named the First Earl of Pembroke); and for his wisdom and integrity as an elder statesman during the troubled reign of King John (r. 1199–1216) and the minority of his son, Henry III. After William's death his son commissioned an unusual and very long verse biography of him in French; the section translated here recounts episodes from William's early life as a bachelor knight. (The surname "Marshal" derives from the family's hereditary position as royal marshals.)

Source: trans. L. Algazi from *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal, comte de Striguil et de Pembroke, régent d'Angleterre*, 3 vols., ed. P. Meyer (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1891–1901), vol. 1: pp. 44–56.

Everywhere the news was heard
That between Saint-Jame and
Valennes
A tournament would soon be held.
Each knight sought to do his best
To prepare to journey there,
Doing all he needed to do.
And two weeks prior it was
announced
That those from Anjou and from
Maine,
From Poitevin and Brittany,
Would challenge Frenchmen,
Englishmen,
And Normans on that glorious day
Without deception or dispute.

The news was spread so far and
wide
That it came as far as Tancarville.
The chamberlain equipped himself
And prepared himself with pleasure
To bear arms in the contest.
The knights' hall filled with men
Preparing to go to the tournament,
But the marshal had no means to go;
He sat and thought about his plight.
His lord came over and spoke to
him:
"What are you thinking, Sir Marshal,
pray?"
"My lord, I have no mount to ride,
And thus I am unfit to go."
"Good Sir Marshal, be at ease;
You need no longer be concerned,
For a fine horse you shall have."
The marshal thanked his sovereign
lord,
Trusting in his given word.
All night the knights who would

attend
Had chain mail rolled and trousers
cleaned,
Adjusting all their suits of mail,
Their neckpieces and coverings,
Saddles, bridles, breast-pieces,
Saddle-girths, stirrups and saddle-
straps.
The others tried their helmets on,
In case they might have need of
them.
This one said: “I shall carry my
shield;
I see that the strap fits me well
And its grip, I also see,
Fits my arm most comfortably;
All here is as it should be.”
On every side could then be seen
Knights donning caps and helmet
mail,
And putting them among their gear.
Many worked to equip themselves
To the best of their abilities.
All night long they toiled away,
With many awake and few asleep;
The next morn they rushed to meet
In a group on the main square.

The chamberlain had fine horses
brought
To give to all his faithful knights.
When the horses all were gone
The marshal still did not have one:
He saw quite well what had
transpired,
And never said a single word
But this: “The horses have all gone,
But I have not been given one.”
Then replied the chamberlain:
“Sir Marshal, it were wrong indeed
That you were not the first to
mount,
But you shall have a battle horse,

A fine and fair one, no matter the
cost;
For no reason shall you be left
behind."
Someone pointed out to him
That there was one horse that
remained
Very well made and strong and fine,
Lively, swift and spirited.
When the horse was brought to him,
A fine, well-bred and valuable steed,
Except for one unfortunate trait
That greatly decreased his worth:
He was so difficult to tame
That none could put his bridle on.
The marshal mounted in a trice:
With no effort nor help from his
arm,
He nudged the horse on with his
spurs,
And the horse flew like a bird,
Jumped off and galloped away.
When it was time to slow him down,
No other horse was stubborn as he;
No matter how expert his rider be,
If he held him back with fifteen bits
The horse would never stop for him.
The marshal perceived this trait,
And he conceived the perfect trick:
He lengthened the horse's reins
By three fingers' width, with a firm
hand,
And this loosened the marshal's grip
So that the bit in the horse's mouth
Came down and settled on his teeth,
So that the horse no longer felt
The bit bearing down on his mouth.
For no gold and no amount of
wealth
Would the horse have stopped
himself.
But with this the horse was well
content
And was so changed by the

marshal's grip
That he consented to trot around
A half an acre of open land
Like the sweetest animal in the land.

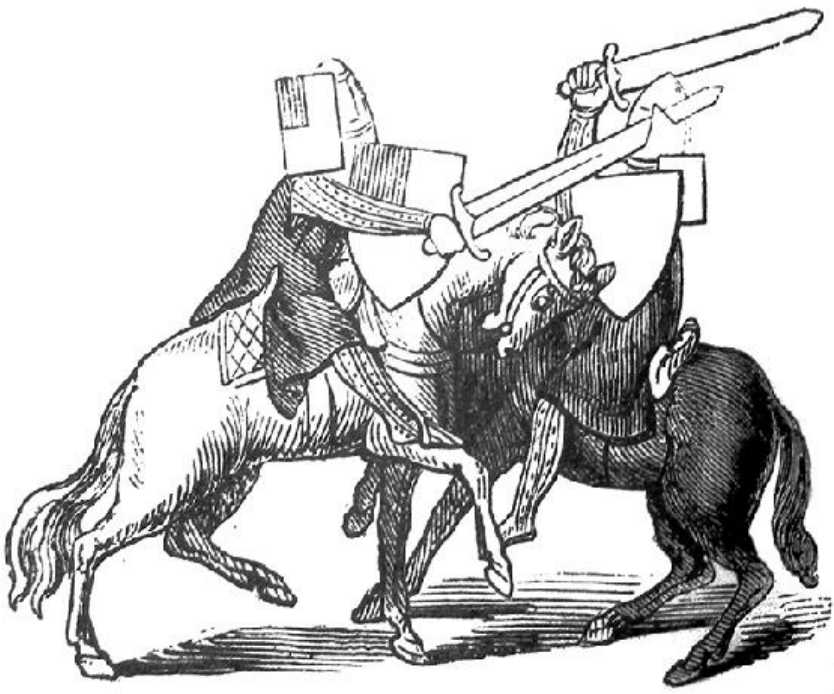

Fig. 31. Knights Fighting on Horseback. This drawing of an illustration from a fourteenth-century collection of Arthurian romances shows mounted knights fighting at close quarters, much as they would have in the melee-style tournaments of William Marshal's youth. As the *History of William Marsha*l (doc. 44) makes clear, participants aimed to capture and ransom as many fellow knights as possible.

The day of the tourney, the knights
all came;
In front of their refuge they
remained
Until they were well and truly
armed
And ready as they were supposed to
be;
Then they rode forth in small groups
Bunched together in an orderly way;

And know ye that, before the joust-
yard,

Such tournaments did not have
rules,
Nor did one dispute or discuss,
Except to lose or win it all.
The chamberlain stood back and
watched;
Forty or more stalwart knights
Were fighting under his banner;
Such well-equipped knights had
never been seen.
Many rode in dignity
To join the contest on that day.
The king of Scotland was present
too
And rode his horse like a gentleman;
Many decorated knights rode with
him,
Too many to easily count.
But why bore you with the details?
Sir Philip of Valognes
Was so elegantly equipped
And in his bearing quite refined
And more handsome than all the
rest,
So much more alert than any bird,
That he was by others much
admired.
The marshal studied him carefully:
Forthwith he left the gathering,
He spurred on his horse Blancart,
Between them he raced with all his
might
And took Philip's mount by the
reins.
Philip tried valiantly to resist,
But against the marshal 'twas all in
vain:
By sheer strength the marshal pulled
his horse
Out of the midst of the tournament;
The marshal asked for Philip's word
And trusted him to stay outside
So the marshal could continue to
fight.

And when he had left his prisoner
He threw himself back into the fray;
Soon he took another knight
With a lance which he retrieved,
And with the remains of the lance
He fought so well that the knight
submitted
And said he was his prisoner.
So two wealthy hostages had he,

With no injuries and no cause for
shame;
He put his hand to taking a third;
He did so well and fought so hard
That this knight also yielded his
sword;
And another knight then came to
him,
As his prisoner was dismounting,
And said: “Since I fought at your
side,
We should split the price of this
horse.”
“Very well,” said the marshal to
him;
“Whenever you wish to depart,
We’ll split the spoils before you
leave.”
After speaking, he regretted his
words,
But he never went back on his word.
Good sirs, it is true indeed
That God is wise and courteous:
He comes quickly to render aid
To all who have true faith in him.
That morning, the marshal had been
poor
With no money and no horse to ride,
And now he had four and a half
Fine and fair horses, thanks be to
God!
Thus he had palfreys and draft
horses
And pack-horses and fine harnesses.

The tournament came to an end
And the chamberlain took his leave,
He and the knights who rode with
    him.
The marshal was esteemed by all
And many looked on him favorably,
Much more so than they had before.
Thus is proven the old saying:
“The more you have, the more
    you’re liked.”

Soon afterward was heard the news
That between Saint-Brice and
    Bouëre
There would be a tournament.
Whoever wished to increase his
    fame
And demonstrate his skill at arms
Could come and show his prowess
    there.
The chamberlain was preparing to
    go,
But then either illness or bad advice
Changed his mind and turned his
    head

So that he did not go after all.
But the marshal, in any case,
Prepared to travel to the tournament
Because he wanted to compete.
He asked permission of his lord,
Who told him without delay:
“I’m sure you shan’t arrive in time,
For it will take at least three days
For you to get from here to there;
Thus will you not make it in time.”
The marshal, who did not hesitate,
Said: “If it pleases God, I shall;
Do not worry on my account.”
“Go, then, and may God go with
    you!
I shan’t be the one to hold you
    back.”

The marshal took his leave and left

For always he goes willingly
To wherever his fancy leads.
He rode hard both day and night
Through the fields and over hills
So that he arrived in time
To see the knights preparing their
arms.
Most were armed and ready to fight.
He dismounted hurriedly
And armed himself most handily,
Then mounted on his handsome
steed
Of whom he was really quite fond.
Already the knights could be seen:
Some rode in total disarray
And others came in an orderly way,
Arranging themselves in battle
ranks;
And he pursued his business there
As he so well knew how to do.
Thus at the outset did he fight
And triumph over a valiant knight.
He had hardly had a moment's rest
When he saw charging straight at
him
Five knights; they seized his horse's
reins,
But no matter how hard they tried
They could not take him prisoner,

For he gave them too much to do.
They were anxious to capture him,
But more anxious still to defend
themselves:
They hit him hard and many times,
And he was not averse to the idea
Of returning the favor in kind.
He soon lost count of all the blows:
Some wanted to pull him from his
horse,
Others tried to remove his helmet,
Still others tried to pull him down
Over the hind end of his mount;
Some struck him, others hit him,

And when he had escaped them all
He struck them hard upon the head,
Giving them their just reward.
No matter how many blows he
received,
No one could ever unhorse him.
So many of them tried his mettle
That they renounced this fruitless
battle,
And he fought them so fiercely
That he escaped in spite of them;
But they so badly battered him
That they turned his helmet 'round
So that the front was facing his
back;
No matter how he tried to pull
Or take it off, it would not budge
And he could only take it off
By breaking one of the laces off,
And mangling his hands in the
process.

With much effort and much pain
He pulled the helmet from his head;
Thus he could finally get some air.
Two important knights, methinks,
Who had seen him tourneying
Were passing by that very spot,
Sir Bon-Abbé de Rougé
and Sir Jean de Subligni.
Sir Jean recognized him,
But Bon-Abbé knew him not,
But he praised him, saying then:

"Sir Jean, who is that worthy knight
Who knows so well how to fight?
I have not heard tell of him.
See how weary is his mount!"
"Sir William Marshal is his name,"
Said Sir Jean to Bon-Abbé;
"Methinks that there has never been
A more able and honest man.
His arms are from Tancarville."
Then Sir Bon-Abbé replied:

"Any army led by that knight
Must be the better for it, both
In merit and in bravery."

The marshal heard their every word,
And he rejoiced within his heart.
'Tis true that joy and happiness
Enhance good sense and prowess.
Then he put his helmet back on.
Though he was not eager to fight,
He reentered the tournament.
He behaved so valiantly
That all were very much impressed
By the strength and competence
With which he made his way
through the throng.
None pushed in too close to him,
Thus they left him a clear path.
On both sides the crowd was abuzz.
By blows both given and received
He so increased his own renown
That he was granted by acclaim
All the prizes of the day.

But he did not wish to take them all;
Quickly he held out his hand
To a horse from Lombardy,
But this horse had never been tamed
And had never let anyone mount;
Nor did he want to be harnessed,
So the horse dropped to the ground.
The marshal took the horse by the
bit,

Who wished that he would leave
him be;
Thus he took him from the crowd,
And gave him to his squire to hold.
But I shall not bore you any more.

Questions: What are the knights in this poem interested in? How does the poem express chivalric values? What obstacles does William overcome? What are his rewards?

45. John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*

John of Salisbury, a Paris-trained scholar who eventually became bishop of Chartres, was English by birth and a close associate of Thomas Becket, to whom in 1159 he dedicated the Policraticus*, his treatise on government, politics, and power. The extracts below mention some of the classical sources (including one misattributed to Plutarch) on which John, one of the great twelfth-century humanists, drew in composing what some consider the earliest book of medieval political theory. John's use of the human body as a metaphor for the interdependent relationships of various social groups is characteristic of medieval Christian thinkers.*

Source: trans. D.C. Douglas and G.W. Greenaway, eds., *English Historical Documents*, Vol. 2: *1042–1189* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 784–89.

The nature of the state, according to [pseudo-] Plutarch, and what takes the place therein of the soul and the members of the body.

Headings of the same political construction follow in the little book entitled *The Institutes of Trajan,* which I have in part thought fit to make use of in this present work. But this I have done by reproducing its views in outline rather than by using its actual words.

First of all, it is laid down that the prince should judge everything for himself and diligently consider what place he occupies in the whole body politic. . . . Those, indeed, who preside over the practice of religious duties, ought to be upheld and reverenced as being the soul of the body. For who doubts that the ministers of God's holiness are his vicars? Furthermore, as the soul has preeminence over the whole body, so also those whom God calls to be officials of religion are set over the whole body. . . . The prince, indeed, occupies the position of the head in the state, being subject to the one true God and his representatives on earth, as in the human body the head is both animated and ruled by the spirit. The senate takes the place of the heart, whence spring the impulses to good and evil deeds. The judges and provincial governors appropriate the functions of the eyes, ears and tongue, the officials and soldiers correspond to the hands, the courtiers to the sides, the treasurers and financial experts . . . represent the stomach and intestines. These, if they become clogged through excessive indulgence of appetite and remain stubbornly constipated, engender manifold and incurable disorders and bring ruin upon the whole body. The husbandmen correspond to the feet, ever cleaving to the ground, for which the foresight of the head is the more necessary as they find occasion for stumbling, when they tread the earth in obedience to the dictates of the body. For this reason they should be well shod, for they support the weight of the whole body,

keep it erect and enable it to move. Take away the support of the feet from a healthy body and it will be unable to walk under its own power, but will either crawl on its hands, shamefully, helplessly and with great difficulty, or be propelled with the assistance of the animal creation. . . .

[The Function of Soldiers]

. . . What kind of soldiers are they who, despite their oaths, do not conform to the law, but think that the glory of their warfare consists in showing contempt for the priesthood, in disparaging the authority of the Church, in expanding man's empire in such a way as to contract the dominion of Christ, in singing their own praises and flattering and exalting themselves by false proclamations, aping the famous warrior amidst the derision of their hearers? The courage of such men is most evident when they wound the clergy, the defenseless soldiery, either with weapons or with their tongues. What, then, is the true function of the professional soldier? To protect the Church, to fight against treachery, to reverence the priesthood, to ward off injuries from the poor, to ensure peace throughout the provinces and (as taught by a true understanding of the sacrament) to shed his blood and, if need be, to lay down his life for his brethren. . . .

[On Tyrants and Tyrannicide]

. . . In profane letters there is contained a warning that life should be carried on in one way with a friend and in the opposite way with a tyrant. One should certainly not indulge in servile flattery of a friend, but it is permissible to soothe the ears of a tyrant. For it is permissible to flatter one whom it is lawful to slay. Moreover, not only is it lawful to slay the tyrant, but it is likewise just and equitable to do so. For he that takes the sword deserves to perish by the sword. But taking the sword is to be understood of him who seizes it for his own purpose, not of him who receives power to wield it from the lord. He that receives power from God complies with the laws and is the servant of right and justice. But he who seizes power oppresses the rights of men and subordinates the laws to his own will. Therefore the law is justly armed against the man who would disarm the laws, and the authority of the state strikes heavily against him who strives to weaken its power. And though there are many treasonable offenses, none is more serious than this which is practised against the body of the laws themselves. . . .

Wherein the Tyrant Differs from the Prince, and of the Tyranny of

. . . The tyrant then, as the philosophers have depicted him, is one who oppresses the people by violent and despotic rule, even as the prince governs by the laws. Moreover, the law is the gift of God, the model of equity, the pattern of justice, the image of the divine will, the guardian of security, the force unifying and consolidating the people, the rule of conduct for officials, the exclusion and extermination of vices, the penalty for violence and all wrongdoing. The law may be assailed either by force or by cunning; it may be, as it were, ravaged by the cruelty of the lion or lured into the lair of the dragon. By whatever means this occurs, it is clear that divine grace is attacked and that God is in some measure provoked to battle. The prince fights for the laws and the liberty of the people; the tyrant reckons that nothing has been accomplished unless he has nullified the laws and enticed the people into servitude. The prince bears the stamp of divinity, while the tyrant's image is that of a perverted strength and satanic wickedness, in that he copies Lucifer, who forsook virtue and strove to place his seat in the north part of heaven and become like the most High. . . .

Questions: What kinds of analogies does John use to explain the ordering of the state and society? What is the proper relationship between the Church and secular government? How does John distinguish between kings and tyrants?

46. Richard of Devizes on the Third Crusade

The famed warrior-king Richard I (r. 1189–99) is better known as Richard the Lionheart. He visited England only twice during his reign, preferring to use its rich resources to fund his wars on the continent and his crusade to the Middle East. The following account, by a monastic chronicler who was not an eyewitness but was well informed, describes the aftermath of the Christians' capture of the important port city of Acre in 1191.

Source: trans. J.A. Giles, *Chronicles of the Crusades, Being Contemporary Narratives . . .* , ed. H.G. Bohn (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1848), pp. 55–56, 60–64; revised.

86. Richard, the king of the English, had already spent two years conquering the region around Jerusalem, and during all that time no aid had been sent to him from any of his realms. Nor yet were his only and uterine brother, John, count of Mortain, nor his justiciars, nor his other nobles, observed to take any care to send him any part of his

revenues, and they did not even think of his return. The Church, however, prayed to God for him without ceasing. The king's army shrank daily in the promised land, and besides those who were slain by the sword, many thousands more perished every month by the too sudden extremities of the nightly cold and the daily heat. When it appeared that they would all have to die there, every one had to choose whether he would die as a coward or in battle.

On the other side, the strength of the infidels greatly increased, and their confidence was strengthened by the misfortunes of the Christians. Their army was relieved at certain times by fresh troops; the weather was natural to them; the place was their native country; their labor, health; their frugality, medicine. Among us, on the contrary, that which brought gain to our adversaries became a disadvantage. For if our people had too little to eat even once in a week, they were rendered less effective for seven weeks after. The mingled nation of French and English fared sumptuously every day, at whatever cost, while their treasure lasted, and—no offense to the French—they ate until they were sick. . . . To these and other calamities, which were severe and many, a much greater one was added by the sickness of the king.

87. The king was extremely sick, and confined to his bed, as his fever continued without intermission; the physicians whispered that it was an acute semitertian fever. And as they despaired of his recovery even from the beginning, terrible dismay spread from the king's abode throughout the camp. There were few among the many thousands who did not consider fleeing, and the utmost confusion of dispersion or surrender would have followed, had not Hubert Walter, bishop of Salisbury, immediately assembled the council. By strenuous argument he won this concession: that the army should not break up until a truce was requested from Saladin. All the armed men stood in array more steadily than usual, and with a threatening look concealing the reluctance of their minds, they feigned a desire for battle. No one spoke of the king's illness, lest the secret of their intense sorrow should be disclosed to the enemy; for it was well known that Saladin feared the charge of the whole army less than that of the king alone. . . .

[The Saracens eventually proposed a truce in these terms:] If it pleased King Richard, for the space of three years, three months, three weeks, three days, and three hours, such a truce would be observed between the Christians and the infidels, that whatever either one party or the other in any way possessed, he would possess without molestation to the end. During the interval the Christians would be permitted at their pleasure to fortify Acre only, and the infidels Jerusalem. All contracts, all commerce, every act, and every thing

would be mutually carried on by all in peace. [Saladin's brother] Saffadin himself was dispatched to the English as the bearer of this offer.

94. . . . [Eventually,] having resumed his strength of body more by the greatness of his mind than by repose or nourishment, [King Richard] issued a command to the whole coast from Tyre to Ascalon, that all who were able to serve in the wars should come to fight at the king's expense. A countless multitude assembled before him, the greater part of whom were on foot. Having rejected them as useless, he mustered the cavalry, and found scarcely 500 knights and 2,000 shield-bearers whose lords had perished. Not discouraged by their small number, he, being a most excellent orator, strengthened the minds of the fearful with a timely speech. He commanded that it be proclaimed through the companies that on the third day they must follow the king into battle, either to die as martyrs or to take Jerusalem by storm. This was the sum of his project, because as yet he knew nothing of the truce. For there was no one who dared even hint to him, when he had so unexpectedly recovered, that which they had undertaken without his knowledge, through fear of his death. However, Hubert Walter, bishop of Salisbury, took counsel with Count Henry concerning the truce, and obtained his ready agreement with his wishes. So having deliberated together how they might safely hinder such a hazardous engagement, they conceived of the one stratagem . . . to try to dissuade the people from the enterprise. And the matter turned out most favorably; the spirit of those who were going to fight had so greatly failed even without dissuasion, that on the appointed day, when the king, leading the vanguard according to his custom, marshaled his army, of all the knights and shield-bearers no more than 900 were found. On account of which defection, the king, greatly enraged, even raving, and gnawing the pine rod which he held in his hand, at length opened his indignant lips as follows: "O God!" said he, "O God, my God, why have you forsaken me? For whom have we foolish Christians, for whom have we English come here from the furthest parts of the earth to bear our arms? Is it not for the God of the Christians? O fie! How good you are to us your people, who are now given up to the sword for your name; we shall become a portion for foxes. O how unwilling should I be to forsake you in so forlorn and dreadful a position, were I your lord and advocate as you are mine! Truly, my standards will be despised in future, not through my fault but through yours; truly, not through any cowardice of my warfare, are you yourself, my king and my God, conquered this day, and not your vassal Richard." . . .

98. He spoke thus, and returned to the camp extremely dejected;

and as a fit occasion now offered, Bishop Hubert and Henry, count of Champagne, approaching him with unusual familiarity, as if nothing had yet been arranged, begged the king under various pretexts to give his consent to making such overtures to the infidels as were necessary. And thus the king answered: "Since a troubled mind is usually more likely to thwart than to afford sound judgment—I, who am greatly troubled in mind, authorize you, whom I see to be calm of mind, to arrange what you shall think most proper for the good of peace." Having gained their desires, they chose messengers to send to Saffadin upon these matters, at which point Saffadin, who had returned from Jerusalem, was suddenly announced to be at hand. The count and the bishop went to meet him, and being assured by him of the truce, they instructed him on how he must speak with the lord their king. Being admitted to an interview with the king as one who previously had been his friend, Saffadin could scarcely prevail upon the king not to destroy himself but to consent to the truce. For so great were the man's strength of body, mental courage, and entire trust in Christ, that he could hardly be prevailed upon not to undertake in his own person a single combat with a thousand of the choicest infidels, as he was destitute of soldiers. And as he was not permitted to attack, he chose this evasion, that, after a truce of seven weeks, the stipulations of the compact being preserved, it should remain for him to choose whether it were better to fight or to forbear. The two parties put their right hands to the final agreement, that they would faithfully observe it. . . .

99. Richard, king of England, held a council at Acre, and there prudently regulating the government of that state, he appointed his nephew, Henry, count of Champagne, on whom he had formerly conferred Tyre, to be captain and lord of the whole promised land. But he thought it proper to defer his consecration as king till he might perhaps be crowned at Jerusalem. King Richard, now planning to return home, with the assistance of Count Henry appointed men for all the strongholds in his territories and found Ascalon alone without garrison or inhabitants, for lack of people. Thus, taking precaution that it might not become a stronghold of the infidels, he caused the ramparts and fortifications of the castle to be cast down.

On the seventh day of the seventh week, Saffadin drew near with many emirs who desired to see the face of the king. Both sides confirmed the truce by oath, with this provision being added to what had been previously agreed, that during the continuance of the truce no one, whether Christian or infidel, should inhabit Ascalon, and that all the fields pertaining to the town should still belong to the Christians. Hubert, bishop of Salisbury, and Henry, captain of Judea, together with a numerous band, went up to Jerusalem to worship in the place where the feet of Christ had stood. And there was woeful

misery to be seen—captive confessors of the Christian name, wearing out a hard and constant martyrdom; chained together in gangs, their feet blistered, their shoulders raw, their backsides goaded, their backs wealed, they carried materials to the hands of the masons and stone-layers to make Jerusalem impregnable against the Christians. When the captain and bishop had returned from the sacred places, they endeavored to persuade the king to visit them; but the worthy indignation of his great heart could not consent to receive by the courtesy of the infidels that which he could not obtain by the gift of God.

Questions: How do Richard's values and concerns manifest themselves in this account? What does the author think of the king? How do the Europeans see the Muslims of the Middle East? What divisions exist among the crusaders?

47. Enforcing the Forest Law

By 1200, over a quarter of English land was classed as royal forest. Encompassing not only wooded areas but arable land and settlements, the forest was protected by verderers and foresters, officials tasked with preventing these areas from being cleared, planted, or enclosed, as well as enforcing prohibitions against hunting (though local elites could obtain licenses to take a limited amount of game). Keepers were bound to report offenses against forest law to a local court, whose officials dealt with minor offenses and bound serious offenders to appear before the royal justices when they next visited the shire. While imprisonment and exile from the forest could be ordered for serious offenses or repeat offenders, most cases resulted in fines, and thus enforcement of the forest law was very profitable for the crown, bringing in some £11,500 between 1207 and 1212 alone.

Source: trans. G.J. Turner, *Select Pleas of the Forest*, Selden Society Publications 13 (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1901), pp. 2–5; revised.

Pleas of the Forest Heard at Northampton, February 1209

Roger Grim, the reaper of the abbot of Peterborough, was taken as he followed four hinds with his dogs. And he was delivered into the custody of Master Geoffrey Gilbewin, the steward of the abbot of Peterborough, but [Geoffrey] did not bring him before the judges.

Judgment of the county: that the same Geoffrey be in mercy [liable to punishment at the court's discretion] because he did not produce the aforesaid Roger, and that he remain in prison, and so he is delivered to the sheriff's custody. . . .

Let the land of Peter Tanet, namely, the six acres he had from the chaplain of Ufford, be seized into the king's hands. The same Peter and Richard Gerewold are to be fined. They were seen in the forest with bows and arrows within an enclosure. They had no chattels. And the sheriff is ordered to fine them according to the assize of the county. If they do not come, let them be outlawed. Robert of Ufford, clerk, and his whole township are in mercy for the flight of the aforesaid Peter and Richard. . . .

The whole township of Newton is in mercy for the flight of Richard Gelee, their reaper, who was accused of shooting a buck in the short wood of Nassington, for which crime Henry, the son of Benselin, was arrested. The foresters found in the wood of Nassington a doe with its throat cut, and hard by they found Henry, son of Benselin, lying under a certain bush. And they took him and put him in prison. He comes before the justices and denies that he ever knew anything about that doe, and that he only went into the wood to seek his horse. The foresters took him and led him to that doe. Asked if he was guilty or not, the foresters and verderers say they do not think he was guilty, but instead they believe that Richard Gelee, the reaper of Newton, is guilty of that crime, because he fled as soon as he heard that the aforesaid Henry had been arrested. And because Henry himself has taken the cross [vowed to go on crusade], and is not suspected, and has lain in prison for a long time, he is granted permission to make his pilgrimage. Let him start his journey before Whitsunday, and if he returns and can find pledges of his fealty, he may remain in the forest.

Thomas Inkel, forester of Cliffe, found in the wood of Siberton a certain place wet with blood, and he traced the blood in the snow as far as the house of Ralph Red of Siberton, and immediately he sent for the verderers and good men. When they searched Ralph's house, they found the flesh of a doe, and they took Ralph to Northampton and put him in prison, where he died. But before his death, while he was in prison, he accused Robert Sturdi and Roger Tock of Siberton of having taken part in the evil doings in the forest along with him. And the foresters and verderers searched the house of the aforesaid Robert and found the bones of a deer, and so they seized him and sent him to prison. And in the house of Roger Tock they found the ears and bones of wild beasts, so he was arrested and imprisoned as well. Robert Sturdi comes before the justices and says that the dogs of Walter of Preston used to be kenneled at his house. Walter's hunters ate the venison from which the bones found in his house came, and Robert

vouches the aforesaid Walter will attest to this; let him produce him tomorrow. Walter comes and vouches for him, saying that his dogs were kenneled in Robert's house for fifteen days while he was hunting bucks. Roger Tock comes before the justices and denies everything. And the verderers and foresters bear witness that the ears and bones found in his house were those of beasts that the hunters of Walter of Preston took. And because Roger lay for a long time in prison, so that he is near death, it is adjudged that he be released, but let him dwell outside the forest. . . .

The head of a recently dead hart was found in the wood of Henry Dawney at Maidford by the king's foresters. And the forester of the aforesaid Henry is dead. And because nothing can be ascertained about that hart, it is ordered that the whole of the aforesaid town of Maidford be seized into the king's hand, along with the wood belonging to it, on the grounds that the aforesaid Henry can offer no information about that hart. . . .

Thomas the son of Eustace and Thomas of Oswestry are in mercy because they carried bows and arrows in the king's forest without license; the matter must be referred to the king.

Ralph Neirut of Thewelton is in mercy because a crossbow and bow were found in his house without warrant.

Roger Wandard is in mercy for having a greyhound bitch against the assize.

Questions: What activities constituted breaches of forest law? How did the courts encourage communities to police their members and refrain from protecting local offenders? Does this document help explain widespread resentment of the forest laws?

48. Letters of Innocent III and King John

Threatened with the papal appointment of Stephen Langton, an unwanted archbishop of Canterbury, King John (r. 1199–1216) stood up for the traditional relative independence of the English Church and king from papal intervention; the quarrel resulted in a papal interdict that shut down most church functions in England for seven years. In the first letter below, the pope explains details of the interdict to the English clergy. In the second, John makes his ultimate submission to the pope, thus making possible the lifting of the penalty.

Source: trans. H. Gee and W.G. Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the English Church* (London: Macmillan, 1910), pp. 73–77; revised.

Answer of Innocent III Concerning the Interdict, 1208

Innocent the bishop, etc., to the bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester, greeting and apostolic blessing. We reply to your inquiries, that since by reason of the interdict new chrism [consecrated oil] cannot be consecrated on Maundy Thursday, old must be used in the baptism of infants, and, if necessity demands it, the bishop or priest must mix the oil with the chrism so that it will not run out. And although it seems appropriate to administer the viaticum to the dying, yet, if it cannot be had, we believe that the principle of "believe and you have eaten" (Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 25.12) applies in this case, when actual need, and not contempt of religion, excludes the sacrament, and the actual need is expected soon to cease. Let neither gospel nor the church hours be observed in the accustomed place, nor in any other, even if the people assemble there. Let religious men, whose monasteries people have been accustomed to visit for the sake of prayer, admit pilgrims into the church for prayer, not by the greater door, but by a more secret place. Let church doors remain shut except at the chief festival of the church, when the parishioners and others may be admitted for prayer into the church with open doors. Let baptism be celebrated in the usual manner with old chrism and oil inside the church with shut doors, no lay person being admitted save the godparents; and if need be, new oil must be mixed. Penance is to be inflicted as well on the healthy as well as the sick; for in the midst of life we are in death. Those who have confessed in a suit, or have been convicted of some crime, are to be sent to the bishop or his penitentiary, and, if need be, are to be forced to go by the threat of church censure. Priests may say their own hours and prayers in private. On Sunday priests may bless water in the churchyard and sprinkle it; and can make and distribute the bread when it has been blessed, and announce feasts and fasts and preach a sermon to the people. A woman who has given birth may come to church, and perform her purification outside the church walls. Priests shall visit the sick, and hear confessions, and let them perform the commendation of souls in the accustomed manner, but they shall not follow the corpses of the dead, because they will not have church burial. Priests shall, on the day of the Passion, place the cross outside the church, without ceremony, so that the parishioners may adore it with the customary devotion.

John's Surrender of the Kingdom to the Pope, 1213

John, by grace of God king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of

Normandy and Aquitaine, earl of Anjou, to all the faithful in Christ who shall inspect this present charter, greeting. We wish it to be known by all of you by this our charter, confirmed by our seal, that we, having offended God and our mother the holy Church in many things, and being on that account known to need the divine mercy, and unable to make any worthy offering for the performance of due satisfaction to God and the Church, unless we humble ourselves and our realms—we, willing to humble ourselves for him who humbled himself for us even to death, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit's grace, under no compulsion of force or fear, but of our good and free will, and by the common consent of our barons, offer and freely grant to God and his holy apostles Peter and Paul, and the holy Roman Church, our mother, and to our lord the pope Innocent and his catholic successors, the whole realm of England and the whole realm of Ireland with all their rights and appurtenances, for the remission of our sins and those of all our race, as well quick as dead. Now receiving back and holding these, as a feudal dependent, from God and the Roman Church, in the presence of the prudent man Pandulf, subdeacon and familiar of the lord the pope, we swear fealty for them to the aforesaid our lord the pope Innocent and his catholic successors and the Roman Church, according to the form written below, and will do liege homage to the same lord the pope in his presence if we shall be able to be present before him; binding our successors and heirs by our wife, forever, that in like manner to the supreme pontiff for the time being, and to the Roman Church, they should pay fealty and acknowledge homage without contradiction. Moreover, in proof of this our perpetual obligation and grant, we will and establish that from the proper and special revenues of our aforesaid realms, for all service and custom that we should render for ourselves, saving in all respects the penny of blessed Peter, the Roman Church receive 1000 marks sterling each year, to wit at the feast of Saint Michael 500 marks, and at Easter 500 marks; 700 to wit for the realm of England, and 300 for Ireland; saving to us and our heirs, our rights, liberties, and royalties. To all of which, as aforesaid, and willing them to be perpetually ratified and confirmed, we bind ourselves and our successors not to contravene. And if we or any of our successors shall presume to attempt this, whoever he be, unless he makes amends after due warning, let him forfeit his right to the kingdom, and let this charter of obligation and grant on our part remain in force forever.

Questions: How did the interdict affect laypeople and clergy? Which restrictions might have been particularly distressing? How might John's submission have affected the crown's power and prestige?

49. Roger of Wendover's Account of the Rebellion against King

John's troubles were far from over with the lifting of the interdict. Early in his reign he had also lost most of his French territories to the French king, Philip II. Having made peace with the pope, he launched a final effort to reclaim those lands, but in 1214 he was soundly defeated at Bouvines in Flanders. The English barons, chaffing under the oppressive and expensive government of a militarily unsuccessful king, now saw their hopes of regaining their French inheritances disappear. The most dissatisfied of them resolved to try at least to improve John's treatment of them at home, as recounted in this excerpt from the chronicle of Roger of Wendover, a monk at the abbey of Saint Albans.

Source: trans. J.A. Giles, *Roger of Wendover's Flowers of History* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1859), vol. 2, pp. 304–9; revised.

Of the Demands Made by the Barons of England for Their Rights

In 1215, which was the seventeenth year of the reign of King John, he held his court at Winchester at Christmas for one day, after which he hurried to London, and took up his abode at the New Temple. At that place the above-mentioned nobles came to him in gay military array, and demanded the confirmation of the liberties and laws of King Edward [the Confessor], with other liberties granted to them and to the kingdom and Church of England, as were contained in the charter and laws of Henry I; they also asserted that, at the time of the king's absolution [by the pope's representatives] at Winchester, he had promised to restore those laws and ancient liberties, and was bound by his own oath to observe them. The king, hearing the bold tone of the barons in making this demand, much feared an attack from them, as he saw that they were prepared for battle; however, he answered that their demands were a matter of importance and difficulty, and therefore asked a truce till the end of Easter, so that he might, after due deliberation, be able to satisfy them as well as the dignity of his crown. After much discussion on both sides, the king at length, although unwillingly, procured the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of Ely, and William Marshal as his sureties that on the agreed-upon day he would, in all reason, satisfy them all, upon which the nobles returned to their homes. The king, however, wishing to take precautions for the future, caused all the nobles throughout England to swear fealty to him alone against all men, and to renew their homage to him. And, the better to take care of himself, on the day of

Saint Mary's Purification [2 February] he assumed the cross of our Lord [he vowed to go on crusade], being induced to do this more by fear than devotion. . . .

Of the Principal Persons Who Compelled the King to Grant the Laws and Liberties

In Easter week of this same year, the above-mentioned nobles assembled at Stamford, with horses and arms; for they had now induced almost all the nobility of the whole kingdom to join them. . . . They counted among their army 2,000 knights, besides horse soldiers, attendants, and footsoldiers, who were variously equipped. The chief promoters of this pestilence were Robert fitzWalter, Eustace de Vescy, Richard de Percy, Robert de Roos, Peter de Bruis, Nicholas de Stuteville, Saher earl of Winchester, R. Earl Clare, H. Earl Clare, Earl Roger Bigod, William de Mowbray, Roger de Cressi, Ralph fitzRobert, Robert de Vere, Fulk fitzWarin, William Malet, William de Montacute, William de Beauchamp, S. de Kyme, William Marshall the younger, [24 more named men], and many others; all of these, being united by oath, were supported by Archbishop Stephen of Canterbury, who was at their head. At this time the king was awaiting the arrival of his nobles at Oxford. On the Monday following the octave of Easter, the said barons assembled in the town of Brackley; when the king learned of this, he sent the archbishop of Canterbury and William Marshal, earl of Pembroke, with some other prudent men, to them to inquire what laws and liberties they demanded. The barons then delivered to the messengers a document containing in great measure the laws and ancient customs of the kingdom, and declared that, unless the king immediately granted them and confirmed them under his own seal, they would, by taking possession of his fortresses, force him to give them sufficient satisfaction as to their demands. The archbishop and his fellow messengers then carried the document to the king, and read to him the heads of the document one by one from start to finish. The king, when he heard the purport of these heads, derisively said, with the greatest indignation, "Among these unjust demands, why didn't the barons ask for my kingdom too? Their demands are vain and delusional, and are unsupported by any plea of reason whatever." And at length he angrily declared with an oath that he would never grant them such liberties as would render him their slave. . . .

The Castle of Northampton Besieged by the Barons

As the archbishop and William Marshal could not by any means persuade the king to agree to their demands, they returned by the

king's orders to the barons, and duly reported all they had heard from the king to them; and when the nobles heard what John said, they appointed Robert fitzWalter as commander of their soldiers, giving him the title of "Marshal of the army of God and the holy Church," and then, one and all flying to arms, they directed their forces toward Northampton. On their arrival there they at once besieged the castle, but after having stayed there for fifteen days, and gaining little or no advantage, they determined to move their camp. . . .

How the City of London Was Given Up to the Barons

When the army of the barons arrived at Bedford, they were received with all respect by William de Beauchamp. There also came to them there messengers from the city of London, secretly telling them that if they wished to get into that city they should come there immediately. The barons, encouraged by the arrival of this agreeable message, immediately moved their camp and arrived at Ware; after this they marched the whole night, and arrived early in the morning at the city of London, and, finding the gates open, entered the city on 24 May, which was the Sunday next before our Lord's ascension, without any tumult while the inhabitants were performing divine service; for the rich citizens were favorable to the barons, and the poor ones were afraid to murmur against them. The barons, having thus got into the city, placed their own guards in charge of each of the gates, and then arranged all matters in the city at will. They then took sureties from the citizens, and sent letters throughout England to those earls, barons, and knights who appeared to be still faithful to the king, though they only pretended to be so, and advised them with threats, as they regarded the safety of all their property and possessions, to abandon a king who swore falsely and made war on his barons, and to stand firm and fight with them against the king for their rights and for peace. And they threatened that, if they refused to do this, they, the barons, would make war against them all, as against open enemies, and would destroy their castles, burn their houses and other buildings, and destroy their warrens, parks, and orchards. . . . The majority of these, upon receiving the barons' message, set out for London and joined them, abandoning the king entirely. The pleas of the exchequer and of the sheriffs' courts ceased throughout England, because there was no one to make a valuation for the king or to obey him in anything.

The Conference between the King and the Barons

King John, when he saw that he was deserted by almost all, so that

out of his regal superabundance of followers he scarcely retained seven knights, was much alarmed lest the barons would attack his castles and reduce them without difficulty. . . . So he deceitfully pretended to make peace for a time with the barons, and sent William Marshal, earl of Pembroke, with several other trustworthy messengers, to them, and told them that for the sake of peace, and for the exaltation and honor of the kingdom, he would willingly grant them the laws and liberties they required; he also sent word to the barons by these same messengers, to appoint a fitting day and place to meet and carry all these matters into effect. The king's messengers then came in all haste to London, and without deceit reported to the barons all that had been deceitfully imposed on them; they in their great joy appointed 15 June for the king to meet them, at a field lying between Staines and Windsor. Accordingly, at the prearranged time and place, the king and nobles came to the appointed conference, and when each party had stationed themselves apart from the other, they began a long discussion about terms of peace and the aforesaid liberties. There were present, on behalf of the king, the archbishops Stephen of Canterbury and J. of Dublin; the bishops [of London, Winchester, Lincoln, Bath, Worcester, Coventry, and Rochester]; Master Pandulph, [papal legate,] familiar of our lord the pope; brother Almeric, master of the Knights Templar in England; the nobles, William Marshal, earl of Pembroke, the earl of Salisbury, Earl Warrenne, the earl of Arundel, Alan de Galwey, W. fitzGerald, Peter fitzHerbert, Alan Basset, Matthew fitzHerbert, Thomas Basset, Hugh de Neville, Hubert de Burgh, seneschal of Poitou, Robert de Ropely, John Marshal, and Philip d'Aubigny. It is not necessary to enumerate those who were present on behalf of the barons, since the whole nobility of England were now assembled together. . . . At length, after various points on both sides had been discussed, King John, seeing that he was inferior in strength to the barons, without raising any difficulty, granted the following laws and liberties [Magna Carta], and confirmed them by his charter. . . .

Questions: What do the barons' grievances appear to be? What is the king's position? Where do the chronicler's sympathies lie? What roles do military strength and military action, as well as simple opportunism after John's defeat at Bouvines play in the political situation?

50. Magna Carta

The popular reputation of Magna Carta *("the great charter")*

as a revolutionary document that is the foundation of modern freedom and democracy has no foundation in the document itself. The content of the text was hardly innovative: the barons were securing the rights to which they felt they were already entitled by custom; the king was agreeing to fulfill his traditional role by acting with the advice and assent of his greater subjects. Nor was the idea of a charter promising good royal behavior new; every twelfth-century ruler had issued such a document at his coronation. What is new and remarkable about Magna Carta *is that the barons forced the king to acknowledge his misdeeds and his obligations in writing, and the impact it had as a symbol of that victory and a set of guarantees for the future.*

Source: trans. E.P. Cheyney, *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, 1st ser. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Department of History, 1894), vol. 1, no. 6, pp. 6–17; revised.

John, by the grace of God, king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, count of Anjou, to the archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, justiciars, foresters, sheriffs, reeves, servants, and all bailiffs and his faithful people, greeting. Know that by the suggestion of God and for the good of our soul and those of all our predecessors and of our heirs, to the honor of God and the exaltation of holy Church, and the improvement of our kingdom, by the advice of our venerable fathers Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England and cardinal of the holy Roman Church, Henry, archbishop of Dublin, William of London, Peter of Winchester, Jocelyn of Bath and Glastonbury, Hugh of Lincoln, Walter of Worcester, William of Coventry, and Benedict of Rochester, bishops; of Master Pandulf, subdeacon and companion of the lord pope, of Brother Aymeric, master of the Knights of the Temple in England; and of the noblemen William Marshal, earl of Pembroke, William, earl of Salisbury, William, earl of Warren, William, earl of Arundel, Alan of Galloway, constable of Scotland, Warin fitzGerald, Peter fitzHerbert, Hubert de Burgh, steward of Poitou, Hugh de Neville, Matthew fitzHerbert, Thomas Bassett, Alan Bassett, Philip d'Albini, Robert de Roppelay, John Marshall, John fitzHugh, and others of our faithful.

1. In the first place we have granted to God, and confirmed by this our present charter, for us and our heirs forever, that the English Church shall be free, and shall hold its rights entire and its liberties uninjured; and we will that it thus be observed; which is shown by this, that the freedom of elections, which is considered to be most important and especially necessary to the

English Church, we granted of our pure and spontaneous will, and confirmed by our charter, before the contest between us and our barons arose; and obtained a confirmation of it from the lord pope Innocent III, which we will observe and which shall be observed in good faith by our heirs forever.

We have granted, moreover, to all free men of our kingdom for us and our heirs forever all the liberties written below, to be had and held by themselves and their heirs from us and our heirs.

2. If any of our earls or barons, or others holding from us in chief by military service shall have died, and when he has died his heir shall be of full age and owe relief, he shall have his inheritance by the ancient relief; that is to say, the heir or heirs of an earl for the whole barony of an earl £100; the heir or heirs of a baron for a whole barony £100; the heir or heirs of a knight, for a whole knight's fee, 100s. at most; and who owes less let him give less according to the ancient custom of fiefs.

3. If, moreover, the heir of any one of such shall be under age, and shall be in wardship, when he comes of age he shall have his inheritance without relief and without a fine.

4. The custodian of the land of such a minor heir shall not take from the land of the heir anything except reasonable products, reasonable customary payments, and reasonable services, and this without destruction or waste of men or of property; and if we shall have committed the custody of the land of any such a one to the sheriff or to any other who is to be responsible to us for its proceeds, and that man causes destruction or waste from his custody we will recover damages from him, and the land shall be committed to two legal and discreet men of that fief, who shall be responsible for its proceeds to us or to him to whom we have assigned them; and if we shall have given or sold to anyone the custody of any such land, and he causes destruction or waste there, he shall lose that custody, and it shall be handed over to two legal and discreet men of that fief who shall be in like manner responsible to us as is said above.

5. The custodian, moreover, so long as he shall have the custody of the land, must keep up the houses, parks, warrens, fish ponds, mills, and other things pertaining to the land, from the proceeds of the land itself; and he must return to the heir, when he has reached full age, all his land, furnished with plows and implements of husbandry according as the time of cultivation requires and as the proceeds of the land are reasonably able to

sustain.

6. Heirs shall be married without disparity, but so that before the marriage is contracted, it shall be announced to the heir's blood relatives.

7. After the death of her husband, a widow shall have her marriage portion and her inheritance immediately and without obstruction, nor shall she give anything for her dowry or for her marriage portion, or for her inheritance which she held on the day of the death of her husband; and she may remain in the house of her husband for forty days after his death, within which time her dowry shall be assigned to her.

8. No widow shall be compelled to marry so long as she prefers to live without a husband, provided she gives security that she will not marry without our consent, if she holds from us, or without the consent of her lord from whom she holds, if she holds from another.

9. Neither we nor our bailiffs will seize any land or rent for any debt, so long as the chattels of the debtor are sufficient to pay the debt; nor shall the pledges of a debtor be distrained so long as the principal debtor himself has enough for the payment of the debt; and if the principal debtor fails in the payment of the debt, not having the means to pay it, the pledges shall be responsible for the debt and if they wish, they shall have the lands and the rents of the debtor until they shall have been satisfied for the debt which they have before paid for him, unless the principal debtor shall have shown himself to be quit in that respect toward those pledges.

10. If anyone has taken anything from the Jews, by way of a loan, more or less, and dies before that debt is paid, the debt shall not draw interest so long as the heir is under age, from whomsoever he holds; and if that debt falls into our hands, we will take nothing except the chattel contained in the agreement.

11. And if anyone dies leaving a debt owing to the Jews, his wife shall have her dower, and shall pay nothing of that debt; and if there remain minor children of the dead man, necessaries shall be provided for them corresponding to the holding of the dead man; and from the remainder shall be paid the debt, the service of the lords being retained. In the same way debts are to be treated which are owed to others than the Jews.

12. No scutage or aid shall be imposed in our kingdom except by

the common council of our kingdom, except for the ransoming of our body, for the making of our oldest son a knight, and for once marrying our oldest daughter, and for these purposes it shall be only a reasonable aid; in the same way it shall be done concerning the aids of the city of London.

13. And the city of London shall have all its ancient liberties and free customs, as well by land as by water. Moreover, we will and grant that all other cities and boroughs and villages and ports shall have all their liberties and free customs.

14. And for holding a common council of the kingdom concerning the assessment of an aid otherwise than in the three cases mentioned above, or concerning the assessment of a scutage [payment by a vassal in lieu of military service], we shall cause to be summoned the archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, and greater barons by our letters under seal; and besides we shall cause to be summoned generally, by our sheriffs and bailiffs, all those who hold from us in chief, for a certain day, that is, at the end of forty days at least, and for a certain place; and in all the letters of that summons, we will express the cause of the summons, and when the summons has thus been given the business shall proceed on the appointed day, on the advice of those who shall be present, even if not all of those who were summoned have come.

15. We will not grant to anyone, moreover, that he shall take an aid from his free men, except for ransoming his body, for making his oldest son a knight, and for once marrying his oldest daughter; and for these purposes only shall a reasonable aid be taken.

16. No one shall be compelled to perform any greater service for a knight's fee, or for any other free tenement, than is owed from it.

17. The common pleas shall not follow our court, but shall be held in some certain place.

18. The recognitions of *novel disseisin*, *mort d'ancestor*, and *darrein presentment* [the common law procedures determining temporary possession of disputed land] shall be held only in their own counties and in this manner: we, or, if we are outside of the kingdom, our principal justiciar, will send two justiciars through each county four times a year, who, with four knights of each county, elected by the county, shall hold in the county and on the day and in the place of the county court, the aforesaid assizes of the county.

19. And if the aforesaid assizes cannot be held within the day of the county court, a sufficient number of knights and freeholders shall remain from those who were present at the county court on that day to give the judgments, according as the business is more or less.

20. A free man shall not be fined for a small offense, except in proportion to the measure of the offense; and for a great offense he shall be fined in proportion to the magnitude of the offense, saving his freehold; and a merchant in the same way, saving his merchandise; and the villein shall be fined in the same way, saving his tools of cultivation, if he shall be at our mercy; and none of the above fines shall be imposed except by the oaths of honest men of the neighborhood.

21. Earls and barons shall only be fined by their peers, and only in proportion to their offense.

22. A clergyman shall be fined, like those before mentioned, only in proportion to his lay holding, and not according to the extent of his ecclesiastical benefice.

23. No manor or man shall be compelled to make bridges over the rivers except those which ought to do it of old and rightfully.

24. No sheriff, constable, coroners, or other bailiffs of ours shall hold pleas of our crown.

25. All counties, hundreds, wapentakes, and tithings [small traditional units of land] shall be at the ancient rents and without any increase, excepting our demesne manors.

26. If any person holding a lay fief from us shall die, and our sheriff or bailiff shall show our letters-patent of our summons concerning a debt which the deceased owed to us, it shall be lawful for our sheriff or bailiff to attach and levy on the chattels of the deceased found on his lay fief, to the value of that debt, in the view of legal men, but in such a way that nothing be removed thence until the clear debt to us shall be paid; and the remainder shall be left to the executors for the fulfilment of the will of the deceased; and if nothing is owed to us by him, all the chattels shall go to the deceased, saving to his wife and children their reasonable shares.

27. If any free man dies intestate, his chattels shall be distributed by the hands of his near relatives and friends, under the oversight of the Church, saving to each one the debts which the

deceased owed to him.

28. No constable or other bailiff of ours shall take anyone's grain or other chattels, without immediately paying for them in money, unless he is able to obtain a postponement at the good-will of the seller.

29. No constable shall require any knight to give money in place of his ward of a castle if he is willing to furnish that ward in his own person or through another honest man, if he himself is not able to do it for a reasonable cause; and if we shall lead or send him into the army he shall be free from ward in proportion to the amount of time by which he has been in the army for us.

30. No sheriff or bailiff of ours or anyone else shall take horses or wagons of any free man for carrying purposes except on the permission of that free man.

31. Neither we nor our bailiffs will take the wood of another man for castles, or for anything else which we are doing, except by the permission of him to whom the wood belongs.

32. We will not hold the lands of those convicted of a felony for more than a year and a day, after which the lands shall be returned to the lords of the fiefs.

33. All the fish-weirs in the Thames and the Medway, and throughout all England, shall be done away with, except those on the coast.

34. The writ which is called *praecipe* [a writ requiring something to be done by a defendant, or demanding an explanation for non-performance] shall not be given for the future to anyone concerning any tenement by which a free man can lose his court.

35. There shall be one measure of wine throughout our whole kingdom, and one measure of ale, and one measure of grain, that is, the London quarter, and one width of dyed cloth and of russets and of halbergets, that is two ells within the selvages; of weights, moreover, it shall be as of measures.

36. Nothing shall henceforth be given or taken for a writ of inquisition concerning life or limbs, but it shall be given freely and not denied.

37. If anyone holds from us by fee farm or by non-military tenure or by urban tenure, and holds land by military service from another, we will not have the guardianship of the heir of his

land which is of the fief of another, on account of that fee farm, or soccage, or burgage [forms of land tenure]; nor will we have the custody of that fee farm, or soccage, or burgage, unless that fee farm itself owes military service. We will not have the guardianship of the heir or of the land of anyone, which he holds from another by military service on account of any petty serjeanty [special service] which he holds from us by the service of paying to us knives or arrows, or things of that kind.

38. In future no bailiff shall place anyone to his law on his simple affirmation, without credible witnesses brought for this purpose.

39. No free man shall be taken or imprisoned or dispossessed, or outlawed, or banished, or in any way destroyed, nor will we go upon him, nor send upon him, except by the legal judgment of his peers or by the law of the land.

40. To no one will we sell, to no one will we deny or delay, right or justice.

41. All merchants shall be safe and secure in going out from England and coming into England and in remaining and going through England, as well by land as by water, for buying and selling, free from all evil tolls, by the ancient and rightful customs, except in time of war; and if they are from a land at war with us, and if such are found in our land at the beginning of war, they shall be attached without injury to their bodies or goods, until it shall be known from us or from our principal justiciar in what way the merchants of our land are treated who shall be then found in the country which is at war with us; and if ours are safe there, the others shall be safe in our land.

42. Henceforth anyone is permitted to leave our kingdom and to return, safely and securely, by land and by water, saving their fidelity to us, except in time of war for some short time, for the common good of the kingdom; excepting persons imprisoned and outlawed according to the law of the realm, and people from a land at war with us, and merchants, of whom it shall be done as is before said.

43. If anyone holds from any escheat [a fief reverting to the lord in the absence of an heir], as from the honor of Wallingford, or Nottingham, or Boulogne, or Lancaster, or from other escheats which are in our hands and are baronies, and he dies, his heir shall not give any other relief, nor do to us any other service than he would do to the baron, if that barony was in the hands of the baron; and we will hold it in the same way as the baron

held it.

44. Men who dwell outside the forest shall not henceforth come before our justiciars of the forest on common summons, unless they are in a plea of the forest, or are pledges for any person or persons who are arrested on account of the forest.

45. We will not make any justiciars, constables, sheriffs or bailiffs except those who know the law of the realm and are well inclined to observe it.

46. All barons who have founded abbeys for which they have charters of earlier kings of England, or ancient tenure, shall have their custody when they have become vacant, as they ought to have.

47. All forests which have been made into forest in our time shall be disafforested immediately; and so it shall be concerning riverbanks which in our time have been fenced in.

48. All the bad customs concerning forests and warrens and concerning foresters and warreners, sheriffs and their servants, riverbanks and their guardians shall be inquired into immediately in each county by twelve sworn knights of the same county, who shall be elected by the honest men of the same county, and within forty days after the inquisition has been made, they shall be entirely destroyed by them, never to be restored, provided that we be first informed of it, or our justiciar, if we are not in England.

49. We will immediately give back all hostages and charters which have been delivered to us by Englishmen as security for peace or for faithful service.

50. We will remove absolutely from their bailiwicks the relatives of Gerard de Athyes, so that for the future they shall have no bailiwick in England; Engelard de Cygony, Andrew, Peter and Gyon de Chancelles, Gyon de Cygony, Geoffrey de Martin and his brothers, Philip Mark and his brothers, and Geoffrey his nephew and their whole retinue.

51. And immediately after the reestablishment of peace we will remove from the kingdom all foreign-born soldiers, crossbow men, servants, and mercenaries who have come with horses and arms for the injury of the realm.

52. If anyone shall have been dispossessed or removed by us without legal judgment of his peers, from his lands, castles,

franchises, or his right we will restore them to him immediately; and if contention arises about this, then it shall be done according to the judgment of the twenty-five barons, of whom mention is made below concerning the security of the peace. Concerning all those things, however, from which anyone has been removed or of which he has been deprived without legal judgment of his peers by King Henry our father, or by King Richard our brother, which we have in our hand, or which others hold, and which is our duty to guarantee, we shall have respite till the usual term of crusaders [three years]; excepting those things about which the suit has been begun or the inquisition made by our writ before our assumption of the cross; when, however, we shall return from our journey, or if by chance we desist from the journey, we will immediately show full justice in regard to them.

53. We shall, moreover, have the same respite, in the same manner, about doing justice in regard to the forests which are to be disafforested or to remain forests, which Henry our father or Richard our brother made into forests; and concerning the custody of lands which are in the fief of another, custody of which we have until now had on account of a fief which anyone has held from us by military service; and concerning the abbeys which have been founded in fiefs of others than ourselves, in which the lord of the fee has asserted his right; and when we return or if we should desist from our journey we will immediately show full justice to those complaining in regard to them.

54. No one shall be seized nor imprisoned on the appeal of a woman concerning the death of anyone except her husband.

55. All fines which have been imposed unjustly and against the law of the land, and all penalties imposed unjustly and against the law of the land are altogether excused, or will be on the judgment of the twenty-five barons of whom mention is made below in connection with the security of the peace, or on the judgment of the majority of them, along with the aforesaid Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, if he is able to be present, and others whom he may wish to call for this purpose along with him. And if he should not be able to be present, nevertheless the business shall go on without him, provided that if any one or more of the aforesaid twenty-five barons are in a similar suit they should be removed as far as this particular judgment goes, and others who shall be chosen and put upon oath by the remainder of the twenty-five shall be substituted

for them for this purpose.

56. If we have dispossessed or removed any Welshmen from their lands, or franchises, or other things, without legal judgment of their peers, either in England or in Wales, they shall be immediately returned to them; and if a dispute shall have arisen over this, then it shall be settled in the borderland by judgment of their peers, concerning holdings of England according to the law of England, concerning holdings of Wales according to the law of Wales, and concerning holdings of the borderland according to the law of the borderland. The Welsh shall do the same to us and ours.

57. Concerning all those things, however, from which any one of the Welsh shall have been removed or dispossessed without legal judgment of his peers, by King Henry our father, or King Richard our brother, which we hold in our hands, or which others hold, and we are bound to warrant to them, we shall have respite till the usual period of crusaders, except those about which suit was begun or inquisition made by our command before our assumption of the cross. When, however, we shall return or if by chance we shall not make our journey [to the Holy Land], we will show full justice to them immediately, according to the laws of the Welsh and the aforesaid parts.

58. We will give back the son of Llywelyn [the Great, Welsh prince of Gwynedd] immediately, and all the hostages from Wales and the charters which were delivered to us as a security for peace.

59. We will act toward Alexander, king of the Scots, concerning the return of his sisters and his hostages, and concerning his franchises and his right, according to the manner in which we shall act toward our other barons of England, unless it ought to be otherwise by the charters which we hold from William his father, formerly king of the Scots, and this shall be by the judgment of his peers in our court.

60. Moreover, all those customs and franchises mentioned above which we have conceded in our kingdom, and which are to be fulfilled, as far as pertains to us, in respect to our men, all men of our kingdom shall observe as far as pertains to them, clergy as well as laymen, in respect to their men.

61. Since, moreover, for the sake of God, and for the improvement of our kingdom, and for the better quieting of the hostility sprung up lately between us and our barons, we have made all these concessions; wishing them to enjoy these in complete and

firm stability forever, we make and concede to them the security described below; that is to say, that they shall elect twenty-five barons of the kingdom, who ought with all their power to observe, hold, and cause to be observed, the peace and liberties which we have conceded to them, and by this our present charter confirmed to them. In this way, if we or our justiciar, or our bailiffs, or any one of our servants shall have done wrong in any way toward anyone, or shall have transgressed any of the articles of peace or security, and the wrong shall have been shown to four barons of the aforesaid twenty-five, let those four barons come to us or to our justiciar, if we are out of the kingdom, laying before us the transgression, and let them ask that we correct that transgression without delay. And if we shall not have corrected the transgression, or if we shall be out of the kingdom, if our justiciar shall not have corrected it within forty days, counting from the time in which it has been shown to us or to our justiciar, then the aforesaid four barons shall refer the matter to the remainder of the twenty-five barons, and let these twenty-five, with the whole community of the country, distress and injure us in every way they can; that is, by the seizure of our castles, lands, possessions, and in such other ways as they can until it shall have been corrected according to their judgment, saving our person and that of our queen, and those of our children. And when the correction has been made, let them devote themselves to us as they did before. And let whoever in the country wishes take an oath that in all the above-mentioned measures he will obey the orders of the aforesaid twenty-five barons, and that he will injure us as far as he is able with them, and we give permission to swear publicly and freely to each one who wishes to swear, and no one will we ever forbid to swear. All those, moreover, in the country who of themselves and their own will are unwilling to take an oath to the twenty-five barons as to distressing and injuring us along with them, we will compel to take the oath by our mandate, as before said. And if any one of the twenty-five barons shall have died or departed from the land or shall in any other way be prevented from taking the above-mentioned action, let the remainder of the aforesaid twenty-five choose another in his place, according to their judgment, who shall take an oath in the same way as the others. In all those things, moreover, which are committed to those twenty-five barons to carry out, if perhaps the twenty-five are present, and some disagreement arises among them about something, or if any of them when they have been summoned

are not willing or not able to be present, let that be considered valid and firm which the greater part of those who are present arrange or command, just as if the whole twenty-five had agreed; and let the aforesaid twenty-five swear that they will observe faithfully all the things which are said above, and with all their ability cause them to be observed. And we will obtain nothing from anyone, either by ourselves or by another by which any of these concessions and liberties shall be revoked or diminished; and if any such thing shall have been obtained, let it be invalid and void, and we will never use it by ourselves or by another.

62. And all ill will, grudges, and anger sprung up between us and our men, clergy and laymen, from the time of the dispute, we have fully renounced and pardoned to all. Moreover, all transgressions committed on account of this dispute, from Easter in the sixteenth year of our reign till the restoration of peace, we have fully remitted to all, clergy and laymen, and as far as pertains to us, fully pardoned. Moreover, we have caused to be made for them testimonial letters-patent of lord Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, lord Henry, archbishop of Dublin, and of the aforesaid bishops and of master Pandulf, in respect to that security and the concession named above.

63. Wherefore we will and firmly command that the Church of England shall be free, and that the men of our kingdom shall have and hold all the aforesaid liberties, rights and concessions, well and peacefully, freely and quietly, fully and completely, for themselves and their heirs, from us and our heirs, in all things and places, forever, as before said. It has been sworn, moreover, as well on our part as on the part of the barons, that all these things spoken of above shall be observed in good faith and without any evil intent. Witness the above named and many others. Given by our hand in the meadow called Runnymede, between Windsor and Staines, on the fifteenth day of June, in the seventeenth year of our reign.

Questions: What indications are there of the political events surrounding the making of the charter? How is the king's power limited? What rights are secured for the barons? What indications are there of concern for the interests of other social groups? How does Magna Carta compare with Henry I's coronation charter (doc. 28)? How do the barons attempt to ensure the charter's enforcement? Are such measures likely to work?

Chapter Four

The Thirteenth Century, 1216–1299

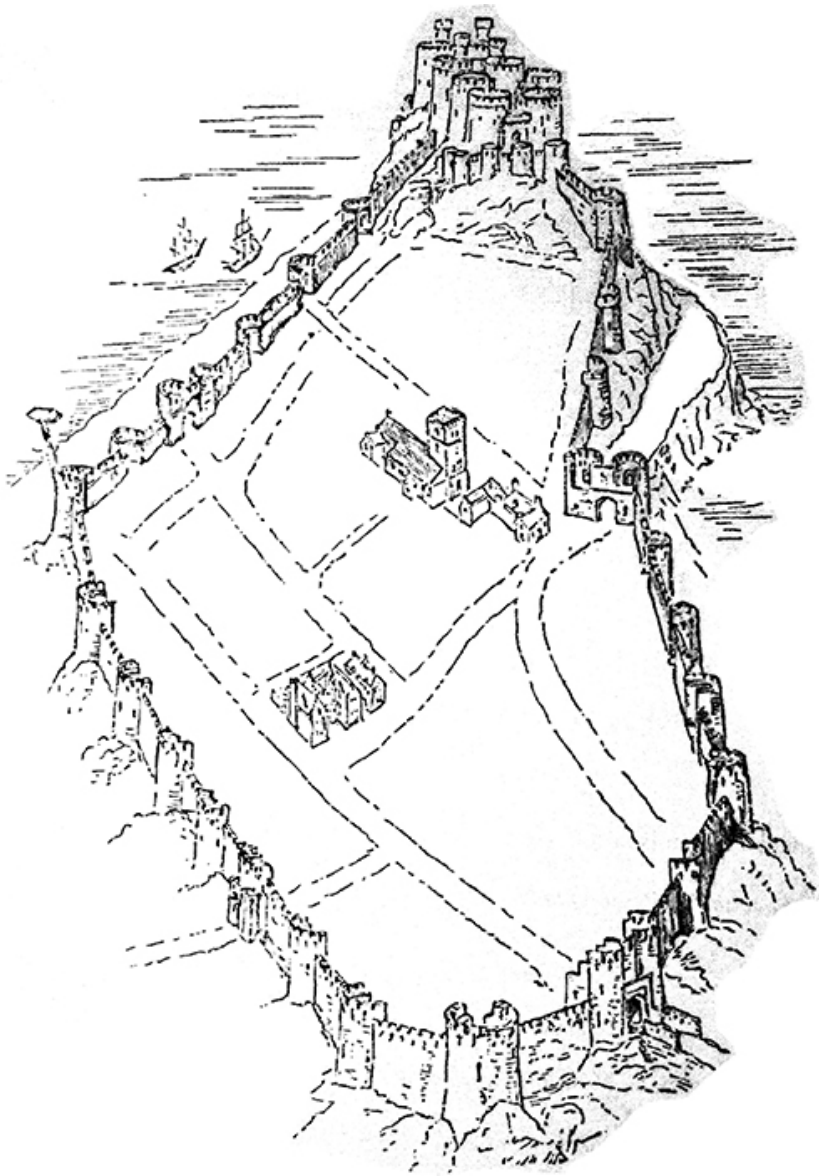

Fig. 32. Conwy Castle and Town. Built in northwest Wales by Edward I (r. 1272–1307) on the site of a monastery favored by the native Welsh princes, the complex at Conwy included a walled town and a formidable curtain-walled castle. The project cost £15,000, a sum equal to over half of the English crown's annual tax revenues at that time.

51. Letters of Queen Isabella of Angoulême

King John died shortly after issuing Magna Carta, to be succeeded by his nine-year-old son, Henry III (r. 1216–72). The young king's widowed mother was a southern French noblewoman who had been betrothed to a neighboring Frenchman, Hugh de Lusignan the Elder, before King John managed to marry her instead. She was unpopular at the English royal court and was excluded from her son's regency government, to her chagrin. At the time she wrote these letters, she had returned to France, where her young daughter Joanna, sister of the little king, was betrothed to Hugh de Lusignan the Younger, son of Isabella's former fiancé.

Source: trans. A. Crawford, *Letters of the Queens of England, 1100–1547* (Dover, NH: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1994), pp. 51–53.

Isabella, Queen of England, to Her Son, Henry III [ca 1218–19]

To her dearest son, Henry, by the grace of God, the illustrious king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, count of Anjou, I Isabella, by the same grace of God, his humble mother, queen of England, always pray for your safety and good fortune.

Your Grace knows how often we have begged you that you should give us help and advice in our affairs, but so far you have done nothing. Therefore we attentively ask you again to dispatch your advice quickly to us, but do not just gratify us with words. You can see that without your help and advice, we cannot rule over or defend our land. And if the truces made with the king of France were to be broken, this part of the country has much to fear. Even if we had nothing to fear from the king himself, we do indeed have such neighbors who are as much to be feared as the said king of France. So without delay you must formulate such a plan which will benefit this part of the country which is yours and ours; it is necessary that you do this to ensure that neither you nor we should lose our land through your failure to give any advice or help. We even beg you to act on our behalf, that we can have for the time being some part of those lands which our husband, your father, bequeathed to us. You know truly how much we owe him, but even if our husband had bequeathed

nothing to us, you ought by right to give us aid from your resources, so that we can defend our land, since on this your honor and advantage depend.

Wherefore we are sending over to you Sir Geoffrey de Bodeville and Sir Waleran, entrusting to them many matters which cannot be set down in writing to you, and you can trust them in what they say to you on our behalf concerning the benefit to you and us.

Isabella, Queen of England, to Pandulph, Bishop-Elect of Norwich [ca June 1219]

Dearest father and lord Pandulph, by the grace of God, bishop-elect of Norwich, chamberlain of our lord the pope and legate of the apostolic see, I Isabella, by the same grace, queen of England, lady of Ireland, duchess of Normandy and Aquitaine, and countess of Anjou, greetings.

You will know that we have offered to restore to Bartholomew de Podio, at the entreaty of our son, the king of England, and of his Council, in entirety all his land, his possessions and the rents he received before we came here, with the exception of our castles, and also all his hostages, save for his two sons, whom we desire to hold in fair and fitting custody until we are without fear that he will seek to do us wrong, as he once sought to wrong the count of Augi and the other barons of the land in spite of us. If he refused this offer of ours, we offered him the sure judgment of our court, but he totally rejected all this. We are very surprised that our son's Council should have instructed Sir Hugh de Lusignan and Sir Geoffrey Neville, seneschal of Poitou, to support the said Bartholomew against us. Granted that the king our son, or his Council, does not order that we be attacked, nevertheless we know many who will trouble us on Bartholomew's behalf, and our son's Council should be aware lest it issues any instructions which result in our being driven away from our son's Council and affairs. It will be very serious if we are removed from our son's Council. You should know that we have been reliably informed that the aforesaid Bartholomew came into the presence of the king of France and made it known to him that our land was part of his fief; he asked that the king order us to reinstate him in his lands. I certainly think he does not regard our son the king of England very highly, in as much as Bartholomew himself, running hither and thither, is working to harm the king and his people. You should know that Sir Hugh de Lusignan and the seneschal are more eager to carry out this order against us, than they would be if ordered to help us. For if indeed they have been so ordered, until now they have done very little. So we ask you to have orders given, by a letter from the king our son, to Sir

Hugh de Lusignan and the seneschal of Poitou to help us and to take counsel for our land and the land of our lord the king. Please write back to us what your will is.

Isabella, Queen of England, Countess of March and Angoulême, to Her Son, Henry III [1220]

To her dearest son, Henry, by the grace of God, king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, count of Anjou, Isabella, by the same grace queen of England, lady of Ireland, duchess of Normandy and Aquitaine, countess of Anjou and Angoulême, sends health and her maternal benediction.

We hereby signify to you that when the counts of March and Eu departed this life, the lord Hugh de Lusignan remained alone and without heirs in Poitou, and his friends would not permit that our daughter should be united to him in marriage, because her age is so tender, but counseled him to take a wife from whom he might speedily hope for an heir; and it was proposed that he should take a wife in France, which if he had done, all your land in Poitou and Gascony would be lost. We, therefore, seeing the great peril that might accrue if that marriage should take place, when our counselors could give us no advice, ourselves married the said Hugh, count of March; and God knows that we did this rather for your benefit than our own. Wherefore we entreat you, as our dear son, that this thing may be pleasing to you, seeing it conduces greatly to the profit of you and yours; and we earnestly pray you that you will restore to him his lawful right, that is, Niort, the castles of Exeter and Rockingham, and 3500 marks, which your father, our former husband, bequeathed to us; and so, if it please you, deal with him, who is so powerful, that he may not remain against you, since he can serve you well—for he is well-disposed to serve you faithfully with all his power; and we are certain and undertake that he shall serve you well if you restore to him his rights, and, therefore, we advise that you take opportune counsel on these matters; and when it shall please you, you may send for our daughter, your sister, by a trusty messenger and your letters patent, and we will send her to you.

Questions: What concerns does Isabella express? How politically active does she seem to have been? What were her goals? What cards did she hold? How do you explain her surprising course of action as described in the final letter? How do these letters compare with those of Eleanor of Aquitaine (doc. 38)?

52. Henry de Bracton's Notebook: Cases from the Royal Courts

One of the works of Henry de Bracton, a prolific thirteenth-century legal writer, is a collection of summaries of cases from the royal courts. The following cases, all from the year 1230, have been selected to show women as plaintiffs and defendants in civil cases in the royal courts. They can usefully be read in conjunction with the twelfth-century legal treatise by Glanville (doc. 36).

Source: trans. E. Amt from *Bracton's Note-Book*, ed. F.W. Maitland (London: C.J. Clay & Sons, 1887), vol. 2, pp. 315–16, 325, 331–32.

382. Muriel, who was the wife of William de Ros, presented herself on the fourth day versus John Marshal concerning a plea to be heard about one third of 60 acres with appurtenances in Wilton, and one third of the pasture of Stanhale, and one third of 16 acres of meadow with appurtenances in the same vill of Wilton, and one third of 4 acres of land and three dwellings with appurtenances in the same vill of Wilton, which thirds she claims versus John Marshal, and she calls to warrant Hugh de Ros, who responds that he is not obliged to warrant that land and meadow to her, because his father William de Ros, by whose gift she claims that land, died and a jury was impaneled previously by assent of the same John and Hugh concerning the 7 virgates [one quarter of a hide, a variable unit] of land with appurtenances in Wilton, to review whether the said William died seised [in possession] of that land or not.

And the jurors said that the same William died seised of the 7 virgates with appurtenances, by which she recovered seisin of one third of the said 7 virgates with appurtenances as her dower. And because no mention was then made in the oath of the said jurors of the aforementioned 60 acres of land nor of the pasture nor of the meadow nor of the 4 acres, and this was omitted by the forgetfulness of the clerks of the bench, provision was made that the said jurors would be re-summoned to certify whether the said William died seised of the aforesaid 60 acres, the meadow, and the pasture, like the 7 virgates of land concerning which they previously swore. The jurors say that the said William died seised of them, just as of the said 7 virgates. And therefore it was decided that Muriel should recover her seisin and John should be in mercy. And be it known that John did not come and had a day at the bench after the jury was re-summoned, and therefore a jury was impaneled for his default, just as in the principal plea. . . .

395. Matilda, abbess of Romsey, was summoned to respond to Roger Wascelin as to how she prevented the same Roger from

appointing a suitable clergyman for the church of Stokes, which was vacant, etc., and the right of appointment belongs to the said Roger because the same abbess has granted and handed over to Roger the manor of Stokes with all its appurtenances, except certain things which were specifically excepted in her charter, for a term of seven years.

And the abbess, through Richard the clerk, her attorney by the king's writ, . . . comes and acknowledges her charter and that she granted the said manor to him to farm for the said term, with all its appurtenances except aids and tallages of men, and except that no one holding land on that manor could marry his daughter outside the fief without first making a fine with the same abbess, and except fines and reliefs of free men, which she withholds for herself with certain other things, no mention being made of the advowson, and [she acknowledges] that the advowson belongs to that manor. And therefore it has been decided that Roger should recover his right of presentation to the same church as tenant, and the abbess is in mercy, and Roger should have a writ of *non obstante* [a writ defending his right] to the officer of the bishop of Winchester.

403. Alicia, countess of Eu, seeks versus Emma de Belfou 2 carrucates [a plowland, a variable unit] of land with appurtenances in Gunthorpe and in Judham as her right, of which a certain Beatrice her ancestor was seised in her demesne by fee and inheritance, in the time of King Henry [II], grandfather of the lord king, in the year and on the day when he was alive and dead, . . . and the right to that land descended from Beatrice to a certain Henry as son and heir, and from the said Henry to a certain John as son and heir, and from the said John to a certain Henry as son [and heir], and from the said Henry to the same Alicia as daughter and heir. . . .

And Emma comes and defends her right now in all times and places, and she says that she does not have to respond to this writ because at another time the plea about this land was in the lord king's court, so that a fine was made between Hubert de Burgh, earl of Kent and justiciar of England, plaintiff, and the same Emma, by a chirograph [a handwritten document made in duplicate or triplicate from the same piece of parchment and cut or marked so as to prove its veracity], and that neither she nor anyone on her behalf has made a claim, etc.

And the countess comes and says that this ought not to disadvantage her, because she was then overseas, so that she could not make her claim. And Emma cannot deny this. And therefore it has been decided that she should respond.

And Emma says that she holds this land only for her lifetime, and

that this land ought to revert to the said Hubert de Burgh after her death, by the charter made between them, and that this is attested both by the chirograph between them in the lord king's court and by the charter of the lord king which testifies to this, and she calls the same Hubert de Burgh to warrant this for her.

The same countess through her words and by the same right seeks versus Oliva de Montbegon two carrucates of land with appurtenances in Tuckford as her right [by descent from the same Beatrice.]

And Oliva comes and defends her right now, etc., and she says that she does not have to answer, because the same countess seeks 2 carrucates of land with their appurtenances, and the advowson of the church of the same vill is among the appurtenances, and the same countess makes no exception of the advowson, and therefore she does not want to answer this writ, unless the court so decides.

And the countess says that she claims nothing in that advowson, and she did not put it in her writ, and her ancestors were enfeoffed with 7 carrucates in the same vill without the advowson because those who enfeoffed her ancestors kept that advowson for themselves, and therefore it seems to her that she ought to be answered. Afterward they made an agreement, saving the right of the lord king, if it please the lord king, without whom no agreement can stand. The agreement is that the said Oliva and her heirs will hold the said land with appurtenances from the said countess, etc., for that same service which she previously did for it to the lord king, and both of them will do all in their power to keep the accord.

Questions: What kinds of land tenure are claimed or enforced? What standards of proof are maintained? What is the role of the jury in the first case? How did women use the courts? How do these cases fit with Glanville's treatise (doc. 36)?

53. Persecution and Expulsion of English Jews

Hostility toward the Jewish minority became more active in the thirteenth century. The following chronicle extracts and royal documents show official and unofficial discrimination against the Jews, culminating in their expulsion from England in 1290. The focus on those Jews who were moneylenders is obvious and clearly contributed to anti-Semitism, but it is important to note that Christians too practiced and profited from usury, even though it was forbidden by canon law.

Sources: ed. A.E. Bland, *English Economic History: Select Documents* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), pp. 45–47, 50–51; Trokelowe, trans. E.P. Cheney, *Readings in English History Drawn from the*

Original Sources (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1922), pp. 230–31.

Ordinances of Henry III, 1253

The king has provided and decreed . . . that no Jew may dwell in England unless he do the king service, and that as soon as a Jew is born, whether male or female, in some way he shall serve the king. And that there shall be no communities of the Jews in England except in those places where such communities were in the time of the lord king John, the king's father. And that in their synagogues the Jews, one and all, shall worship in subdued tones according to their rite, so that Christians hear it not. And that all Jews shall answer to the rector of the parish in which they dwell for all parochial duties belonging to their houses. And that no Christian nurse shall hereafter suckle or nourish the male child of any Jew, and that no Christian man or woman shall serve any Jew or Jewess, nor eat with them, nor dwell in their house. And that no Jew or Jewess shall eat or buy meat in Lent. And that no Jew shall disparage the Christian faith, nor publicly dispute touching the same. And that no Jew shall have secret intercourse with any Christian woman, nor any Christian man with a Jewess. And that every Jew shall wear on his breast a conspicuous badge. And that no Jew shall enter any church or any chapel save in passing through, nor stay therein to the dishonor of Christ. And that no Jew shall in any way hinder another Jew who is willing to be converted to the Christian faith. And that no Jew shall be received in any town without the special license of the king, except in those towns where Jews have been accustomed to dwell.

Threatened Expulsion of Salle of Canterbury, 1253

The king, etc., to the sheriff of Kent, etc. Know that we caused to be assessed before us upon Salle [Solomon], a Jew, a tallage to be rendered on Wednesday next before Whitsunday in the thirty-seventh year of our reign, and because the same Jew did not render his tallage on the same day he received a command on our behalf before the justices [appointed to the guardianship of the Jews] that within three days after the aforesaid Wednesday he should make his way to the port of Dover to go forth with his wife and never to return, forfeiting his lands to the king. We command you that by oath of twelve good and lawful men you make diligent enquiry what lands he had on the same day, and who holds them, and how much they are worth . . . and that you enquire also by oath, what chattels he had in all chirographs outside the chest, and what they are worth, and to whose hands they have come, and that you have it proclaimed that none of Salle's

debtors shall hereafter render a penny to him—let the proclamation be made in every hundred, city, etc.—and that you take into our hand all the lands, rents and tenements and chattels aforesaid, and safely. . . . [Salle avoided deportation by paying the tallage, and the following year successfully petitioned Henry III to lower his tallage.]

John of Trokelowe's Chronicle

At this time [in 1290] there were Jews dwelling among the Christians in every city and famous town in England. King Edward [I], with the advice of his nobles, ordered them to leave the country, and to depart without fail on one day, and this was the decree: that whatever Jew should be found in England after the first warning should either be plunged in the baptismal font and thus faithfully acknowledge Christ, the son of God, or should have his head cut off. Immediately the Jews, struck with the fear of death, left England, carrying all their possessions with them. When their vessels had set sail and been carried out to sea, storms arose, severe winds blew, their ships were shattered, and many were drowned. Certain ones driven upon the shores of France, by the judgment of God, perished miserably. At length the king of France was touched with pity, although these were enemies of God, and since they were God's creatures, although ungrateful ones, he permitted them to dwell in his kingdom for a short time, and to settle in Amiens. When this was reported in Rome, and reached the ears of the pope, he burned with rage and bitterly denounced the king.

Edward I's Order, 1290

Edward . . . to the treasurer and barons of the exchequer, greeting. Whereas formerly in our Parliament at Westminster on the quinzaine of Saint Michael in the third year of our reign, to the honor of God and the profit of the people of our realm, we ordained and decreed that no Jew thenceforth should lend anything at usury to any Christian on lands, rents or other things, but that they should live by their commerce and labor; and the same Jews, afterward maliciously deliberating among themselves, contriving a worse sort of usury called "courtesy," have depressed our people aforesaid on all sides under the color thereof, the last offense doubling the first; whereby, for their crimes and to the honor of the crucified [Christ], we have caused those Jews to go forth from our realm as traitors: We, wishing to swerve not from our former choice, but rather to follow it, do make totally null and void all manner of penalties and usuries and every

sort thereof, which could be demanded by actions by reason of the Jewry from any Christians of our realm for any times whatsoever; wishing that nothing be in any wise demanded from the Christians aforesaid by reason of the debts aforesaid, save only the principal sums which they received from the Jews aforesaid; the amount of which debts we will that the Christians aforesaid verify before you by the oath of three good and lawful men by whom the truth of the matter may be better known, and thereafter pay the same to us at terms convenient to them to be fixed by you. And therefore we command you that you cause our grace so piously granted to be read in the aforesaid exchequer, and to be enrolled on the rolls of the same exchequer, and to be carefully guarded, according to the form above noted. . . .

Questions: What seem to be Christian concerns about Jews? What evidence is there of a shift in English attitudes toward Jews over time? Are there any hints of sympathy for the Jews, any softening of older defamations, slanders, and crude caricatures (as seen in docs. 42, 50)?

54. The *Ancrene Wisse*

The monastic life was not the only way to dedicate oneself to religion; many men and even more women became anchorites and anchoresses, or hermits. While early Christian hermits had usually dwelt in near total isolation and very harsh conditions, the hermits of medieval England lived rather different lives. The following excerpts come from a set of guidelines produced for a small group of anchoresses, sometime in the first half of the thirteenth century.

Source: trans. J. Morton, *The Nun's Rule, Being the Ancren Riwle Modernised* (London: De La More Press, 1905), pp. 164–65, 237–39, 278–79, 312–20; revised.

2. Of Temptations

. . . An anchoress thinks that she shall be most strongly tempted in the first twelve months after she shall have begun her monastic life, and in the twelve thereafter; and when, after many years, she feels them so strong, she is greatly amazed, and is afraid lest God may have quite forgotten her, and cast her off. No, it is not so! In the first years, it is nothing but ball-play; but now, observe well, by a comparison, how it fares. When a man has brought home a new wife, he, with great

gentleness, observes her manners. Though he sees in her some thing that he does not approve, yet he takes no notice of it, and puts on a cheerful countenance toward her, and carefully uses every means to make her love him, affectionately in her heart; and when he is well assured that her love is truly fixed upon him, he may then, with safety, openly correct her faults, which he previously bore with as if he knew them not: he becomes very stern, and assumes a severe countenance, in order still to test whether her love toward him might give way. At last when he perceives that she has been completely instructed—that for nothing that he does to her does she love him less, but more and more, if possible, from day to day, then he shows her that he loves her sweetly, and does whatever she desires, as for one whom he loves and knows—then all that sorrow becomes joy. If Jesus Christ, your spouse, acts thus to you, my dear sisters, it should not seem strange to you. For in the beginning it is only courtship, to draw you into love; but as soon as he perceives that he is on a footing of affectionate familiarity with you, he will have less forbearance with you; but after the trial—in the end—then is the great joy. . . .

3. Confession shall be complete, that is, all said to one man, from childhood. When the poor widow would clean her house, she gathers into a heap, first of all, all the largest sweepings, and then shovels it out; after this, she comes again and heaps together all that was left before, and shovels it out also; again, upon the small dust, if it is very dusty, she sprinkles water, and sweeps it quite away after all the rest. In like manner must he that confesses himself, after the great sins, shovel out the small, and if the dust of light thoughts fly up too much, sprinkle tears on them, so they will not blind the eyes of the heart. Whoever hides anything has told nothing. . . . We are told of a holy man who lay on his deathbed, and was unwilling to confess a particular sin from his childhood, and his abbot urged him by all means to confess it. He answered and said that it was not necessary, because he was only a child when he did it. Reluctantly, however, at last, through the searching exhortations of the abbot, he told it, and died soon thereafter. After his death, he came one night and appeared to his abbot in snow-white garments, as one who was saved, and said that if he had not fully confessed that particular thing which he did in childhood, he should certainly have been condemned among those who are lost. . . .

4. Confession must also be candid, that is, made without any concealment, and not palliated by comparisons, nor gently touched upon. But the words should be spoken plainly according to the deeds. It is a sign of hatred when men reprehend severely a thing that is greatly hated. If you hate your sin, why do you speak of it in gentle

terms? Why do you hide its foulness? Speak out its shame reproachfully, and rebuke it very sharply, if you would indeed confound the devil. “Sir,” says the woman, “I have had a lover,” or, “I have been foolish.” This is not plain confession. Put no cloak over it. Take away the accessories, that is, the circumstances. Uncover yourself and say, “Sir, I beg the mercy of God, and thine! I am a foul stud mare: a stinking whore.” Give your enemy a foul name, and call your sin by its name without disguise, that is, conceal nothing at all that is connected with it. Yet what is too foul may not be spoken. The foul deed need not be named by its own foul name. It is sufficient to speak of it in such a manner that the father confessor may clearly understand what you mean. . . .

6. Of Penance

. . . Let not anyone handle herself too gently, lest she deceive herself. She will not be able, for her life, to keep herself pure, nor to maintain her chastity without two things, as Saint Aelred [of Rievaulx] wrote to his sister. The first thing is giving pain to the flesh by fasting, by watching, by flagellations, by wearing coarse garments, by a hard bed, with sickness, and with much labor. The second thing is the moral qualities of the heart, such as devotion, compassion, mercy, pity, charity, humility, and other virtues of this kind. “Sir,” you answer me, “does God sell his grace? Is not grace a free gift?” My dear sisters, although purity is not bought from God, but is given freely, ingratitude resists it, and renders those who will not cheerfully submit to labor for it unworthy to possess so excellent a thing. Who was ever chaste amidst pleasures and ease, and carnal abundance? Who ever carried fire within her that did not burn? Shall not a pot that boils rapidly be emptied of some of the water, or have cold water cast into it, and the burning fuel withdrawn? The pot of the belly that is always boiling with food, and especially with drink, is such a near neighbor to that ill-disciplined member that it imparts to it the fire of its heat. Yet many anchoresses, more is the harm, are of such fleshly wisdom, and so exceedingly afraid lest their head ache, and lest their body be too enfeebled, and are so careful of their health, that the spirit is weakened and sickens in sin, and they who ought alone to heal their soul with contrition of heart and mortification of the flesh, become physicians and healers of the body. Did Saint Agatha do so? She who answered and said to our Lord’s messenger who brought her salve to heal her breasts, “Fleshly medicine I never applied to myself.” . . . Wisdom is the mother and the nurse of all virtues; but we often call that wisdom which is not wisdom. For it is true wisdom to prefer the health of the soul to that of the body, and, when we cannot have them

both, to choose bodily hurt rather than, by too powerful temptations, the destruction of the soul. . . .

8. Of Domestic Matters

I said at the outset that you should not, like unwise people, promise to keep any of the external rules. I say the same still; nor do I write them down for any but you alone. I say this in order that other anchoresses may not say that I, by my own authority, am making new rules for them. Nor do I command that they observe them, and you may even change them, whenever you wish, for better ones. In regard to things of this kind that have been in use before, it matters little.

Enough has been said about sight, and of speech, and of the other senses. Now this last part, as I promised you at the commencement, is divided and separated into seven small sections.

Men esteem a thing to be less precious when they have it often, and therefore you should be, as lay brethren are, partakers of the holy communion only fifteen times a year: at midwinter [25 December]; Candlemas [2 February]; Twelfth-day [6 January]; on Sunday halfway between that and Easter, or our Lady's day [25 March], if it is near the Sunday, because of its being a holiday; Easter day; the third Sunday thereafter; Holy Thursday [Ascension Day, forty days after Easter]; Whitsunday [Pentecost, six weeks after Easter]; and midsummer day [24 June]; Saint Mary Magdalen's day [22 July]; the Assumption [15 August]; the Nativity [of the Virgin Mary, 8 September]; Saint Michael's day [29 September]; All Saints' day [1 November]; Saint Andrew's day [30 November]. And before all these days, see that you make a full confession and undergo discipline; but never from any man, only from yourselves. And forego your pittance for one day. And if any thing happens out of the usual order, so that you cannot receive the sacrament at these set times, you may make up for it on the next Sunday, or if the other set time is near, you may wait till then.

You shall eat twice every day from Easter until the later Holyrood day [14 September], which is during harvest time, except on Fridays, and ember days [days of fasting and prayer in each season of the year], and procession days and vigils. In those days, and in the Advent, you shall not eat anything white, except when necessity requires it. The other half year you shall fast always, except on Sundays.

You shall eat no flesh nor lard except if you are gravely ill, and whoever is infirm may eat potage without scruple, and accustom yourselves to little drink. Nevertheless, dear sisters, your meat and your drink have seemed to me less than I would have it. Fast no day upon bread and water, unless you have permission. There are

anchoresses who make their meals with their friends outside the convent. That is too much friendship, because, of all orders, this is most contrary to the order of an anchoress, who is quite dead to the world. . . . Make no banquetings, nor encourage any strange vagabond fellows to come to the gate; though no other evil may come of it but their immoderate talking, it might sometimes prevent heavenly thoughts.

It is not fit that an anchoress should be liberal with other men's alms. Would we not laugh out loud to scorn a beggar who should invite men to a feast? Mary and Martha were two sisters, but their lives were different. You anchorites have taken to yourselves Mary's part, whom our Lord himself commended. . . . Housewifery is Martha's part, and Mary's part is quietness and rest from all the world's din, that nothing may hinder her from hearing the voice of God. And observe what God says, "that nothing shall take away this part from you." Martha has her office; leave her alone, and sit with Mary stone-still at God's feet, and listen to him alone. Martha's office is to feed and clothe poor men, as befits the mistress of a house. Mary ought not to intermeddle in it, and if anyone blames her, God himself defends her for it, as holy writ bears witness. On the other hand, an anchoress ought to take sparingly only that which is necessary for her. How, then, can she be generous? She must live upon alms as frugally as she can, and not gather that she may give it away afterward. She is not a housewife. . . .

You shall not possess any beast, my dear sisters, except a cat. An anchoress that has cattle appears as Martha was, a better housewife than anchoress; nor can she in any wise be Mary, with peacefulness of heart. For then she must think of the cow's fodder, and of the herdsman's hire, flatter the hayward, defend herself when her cattle are shut up in the pinfold, and moreover pay the damage. . . . An anchoress ought not to have anything that draws her heart outward. Carry on no business. An anchoress that is a buyer and seller sells her soul to the chapman of hell. Do not take charge of other men's property in your house, nor of their cattle, nor their clothes, neither receive under your care the church vestments, nor the chalice, unless force or great fear compels you, for much harm has often come from such caretaking. Let no man sleep within your walls. If, however, great necessity should cause your house to be used, see that, as long as it is used, you have inside there with you a woman of blameless life day and night.

Because no man sees you, nor do you see any man, you may be well content with your clothes, be they white, be they black; only see that they be plain, and warm, and well made, of skins well tawed; and have as many as you need, for your bed as well as for your back.

Next to your flesh you shall wear no flaxen cloth, unless it be of hard and coarse canvas. . . . You shall sleep in a garment and with a belt. Wear no iron, nor haircloth, nor hedgehog-skins; and do not beat yourselves with a scourge of leather thongs, nor a leaded one; and do not cause yourselves to bleed with holly nor with briars without leave of your confessor; and do not use too many flagellations at any time. Let your shoes be thick and warm. . . . Have neither ring, nor brooch, nor ornamented girdle, nor gloves, nor any such thing that is not proper for you to have. . . .

You shall not send, nor receive, nor write letters without leave. You shall have your hair cut four times a year to unburden your head, and be bled as often, and oftener if it is necessary; but if anyone can dispense with this, I will permit it. When you are bled, do nothing that may be irksome to you for three days, but talk with your maidens, and divert yourselves together with instructive tales. You may often do so when you feel dispirited, or are grieved about some worldly matter, or sick. Thus wisely take care of yourselves when you are bled, and keep yourselves in such rest that long thereafter you may labor the more vigorously in God's service, and also when you feel any sickness, for it is great folly, for the sake of one day, to lose ten or twelve. Wash yourselves wheresoever it is necessary, as often as you please.

When an anchoress does not have her food at hand, let two women be employed, one who stays always at home, another who goes out when necessary; and let her be very plain, or of sufficient age. . . . Let neither of the women either carry to her mistress or bring from her any idle tales, or new tidings, nor sing to one another, nor speak any worldly speeches, nor laugh, nor play, so that any man who saw it might turn it to evil. . . . No servant of an anchoress ought, properly, to ask stated wages, except food and clothing, with which, and with God's mercy, she may do well enough. . . . Whoever has any hope of so high a reward will gladly serve, and easily endure all grief and all pain. With ease and abundance men do not arrive at heaven. . . .

Questions: How hermit-like were anchoresses? Which aspects of the Ancrene Wisse *would be relevant to ordinary laypeople? Which are specific to female anchoresses? What was the appeal of such a life? Why might it appeal more to women than to men?*

55. Thomas of Eccleston on the Coming of the Friars Minor to England

The religious ferment of the High Middle Ages gave rise to many new religious orders, including the mendicant or "begging" orders, the Dominicans and Franciscans, in the early

thirteenth century. In the extracts below, the Franciscan brother Thomas, later called "of Eccleston," tells of the arrival of the Franciscans in England in 1224.

Source: trans. H. Rothwell, *English Historical Documents*, Vol. 3: *1189–1327* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 680–83.

Of the First Coming of the Friars Minor to England

In A.D. 1224, in the time of the lord pope Honorius [III], in the same year, that is, in which he confirmed the Rule of the blessed Francis, the eighth year of the reign of the lord king Henry [III], son of John, on [10 September,] the Tuesday after the feast of the nativity of the Blessed Virgin, which in that year fell on a Sunday, the friars minor first arrived in England at Dover, being four clerks and five laymen.

The clerks were these: first, Brother Agnellus of Pisa, in orders a deacon, in age about thirty, who had at the last general chapter been designated by the blessed Francis [of Assisi] as minister provincial for England: he had been custodian at Paris and had borne himself so discreetly as to win the highest favor among the brethren and lay folk alike by reason of his renowned holiness.

The second was Brother Richard of Ingworth, an Englishman by birth, a priest and preacher, and an older man. He was the first of the order to preach to people north of the Alps. In course of time, under Brother John Parenti of happy memory, he was sent to Ireland to be minister provincial; he had been Brother Agnellus's vicar in England while Agnellus himself went to the general chapter in which the translation was effected of the remains of Saint Francis and had set a notable example of exceeding holiness. When he had fulfilled a ministry faithful and well pleasing to God, he was absolved in the general chapter by Brother Albert of happy memory from holding any further offices among the brethren, and, fired by zeal for the faith, set out for Syria [on pilgrimage] and there, making a good death, fell on sleep.

The third was Brother Richard of Devon, also an Englishman by birth, in orders an acolyte, in age a youth; he left us many examples of long-suffering and obedience. For after he had traveled through diverse provinces under obedience, he lived, though frequently worn out by quartan fevers, for eleven whole years at the place [a small Franciscan house] at Romney.

The fourth was Brother William of Ashby, still a novice wearing the hood of a probationer, likewise English by birth, young in years

and in standing. For a long time he endured various offices in praiseworthy fashion, the spirit of Jesus Christ aiding him, and he showed us examples of humility and poverty, love and gentleness, obedience and patience and every perfection. For when Brother Gregory, minister in France, asked him if he willed to go to England, he replied that he did not know. And when the minister marveled at this reply, Brother William at length said the reason he did not know what he wished was that his will was not his own but the minister's. For this reason he willed whatsoever the minister willed him to will. Brother William of Nottingham testified of him that he was perfect in obedience, for when he offered him the choice of the place where he would live, he said that that place best pleased him which it pleased the brother to appoint for him. And because he was specially gifted with charm and a most prepossessing gentleness, he called forth the goodwill of many layfolk toward the order. Moreover, he brought into the way of salvation many persons of diverse positions, ages and ranks, and in many ways he gave convincing proof that sweet Jesus knew how to do marvelous things. . . . At a time of fleshly temptation he mutilated himself in his zeal for chastity. After which he sought the pope, who, though severely reproving him, granted him a dispensation so that he might celebrate the divine offices. After many years this same William died peacefully in London. . . .

These nine [members of the Franciscan mission] were out of charity conveyed across to England and courteously provided for in their need by the monks of Fécamp. When they reached Canterbury, they stayed for two days at the priory of the Holy Trinity, then without delay four of them set off to London, namely Brother Richard of Ingworth, Brother Richard of Devon, Brother Henry and Brother Melioratus. The other five went to the priests' hospital, where they remained until they had found somewhere to live. In fact, a small room was soon afterward granted them underneath the schoolhouse, where they sat all day as if they were enclosed. But when the scholars returned home in the evening they went into the schoolhouse in which they had sat and there made themselves a fire and sat beside it. And sometimes they set on the fire a little pot containing dregs of beer when it was time to drink at the evening collation, and they put a dish in the pot and drank in turn, and one by one they spoke some edifying words. And one who was their associate in this unfeigned simplicity and holy poverty, and merited to be a partaker in it, bore witness that their drink was sometimes so thick that when it had to be heated they put water in and so drank it joyfully. . . .

Of the First Separation of the Brethren

Now when they reached London, the four brethren already named went to the Friars Preachers [the Dominicans], and were graciously received by them. They remained with them for fifteen days, eating and drinking what was set before them quite as if they were members of the house. After this, they rented a house for themselves in Cornhill and made cells for themselves in it, stuffing grasses into gaps in the cells. And they remained in that simple state until the following summer, with no chapel, for they had not yet been granted the privilege of setting up altars and celebrating the divine offices in their own places.

And without delay, before the feast of All Saints [1 November], and even before Brother Agnellus came to London, Brother Richard of Ingworth and Brother Richard of Devon set out for Oxford and there were similarly received in the friendliest manner by the Friars Preachers; they ate in their refectory and slept in their dormitory like members of their house for eight days. After that they rented a house for themselves in the parish of St. Ebbe's, and there remained without a chapel until the following summer. There sweet Jesus sowed a grain of mustard-seed that afterward became greater than all herbs. From there Brother Richard of Ingworth and Brother Richard of Devon set out for Northampton and were taken in at the hospital there. Afterward they rented a house for themselves in the parish of St. Giles, where the first guardian was Brother Peter the Spaniard, he who wore an iron corselet next to his skin and gave many other examples of perfection. . . .

Sir John Travers first received the brethren in Cornhill and rented a house for them, and a certain Lombard, a layman, Henry by name, was made its guardian. He then for the first time learned to read, by night, in the church of Saint Peter, Cornhill. Afterward he was made vicar of the English province while Brother Agnellus was going to the general chapter. In the vicariate he had, however, as coadjutor Brother Richard of Ingworth. But he did not support such a high state of happiness unto the end, rather growing luxurious in these honors and estranged from his true self, and he apostatized from the order in pitiable fashion.

It is worthy of record that in the second year of the administration of Brother Peter, the fifth minister in England, in the thirty-second year, to wit, from the coming of the brethren to England, the brethren living in England in forty-nine places were numbered at twelve hundred and forty-two.

Questions: How was the Franciscan mission organized? What role does divine intervention play in Thomas's story? What do we learn about the organization of the order in general? What characteristics

of the Franciscan brothers were most highly prized? What signs are there of the absolute poverty promoted by the order?

56. The Baronial Cause: *The Song of Lewes*

Despite his early reaffirmation of Magna Carta, King Henry III (r. 1216–72) found his reign plagued by clashes with his barons, which eventually ended in civil war. The main issue was the barons' insistence that the king should be guided by their advice rather than that of his "foreign favorites"—a problem foreshadowed in Magna Carta. Earl Simon de Montfort, formerly a close friend of the king, emerged as the leader of the rebellious barons in the 1260s and led them to an important victory over the king at the Battle of Lewes in 1264. A number of political songs supporting the baronial cause survive from this era; the excerpts below come from one such song, written shortly after the battle.

Source: trans. T. Wright, *The Political Songs of England, from the Reign of John to That of Edward II* (London: The Camden Society, 1839), pp. 72–73, 75–77, 96–101, 102, 103–6, 108–9, 110–11, 112–14, 114–17, 117–18, 120–21; revised.

Write quickly, O pen of mine, for, writing such things as follow, I bless and praise with my tongue thee, O right hand of God the Father, Lord of virtues, who gives prosperity at thy nod to thine own, whenever it is thy will. Let all those people now learn to put their trust in thee, whom they, who are now scattered, wished to destroy—they of whom the head is now taken, and the members are in captivity; the proud people is fallen; the faithful are filled with joy. Now England breathes in the hope of liberty; may the grace of God grant this land prosperity! The English were despised like dogs; but now they have raised their head over their vanquished enemies.

In the year of grace 1264, and on [14 May,] the Wednesday after the festival of Saint Pancras, the army of the English bore the brunt of a great battle at the castle of Lewes: for reasoning yielded to rage, and life to the sword. They met on the fourteenth of May, and began the battle of this terrible strife; which was fought in the county of Sussex, and in the bishopric of Chichester. The sword was powerful; many fell; truth prevailed; and the false men fled. For the Lord of valor resisted the perjured men, and defended those who were pure with the shield of truth. . . .

May the Lord bless Simon de Montfort! and also his sons and his army! who, exposing themselves magnanimously to death, fought

valiantly, condoling the lamentable lot of the English who, trodden under foot in a manner scarcely to be described, and almost deprived of all their liberties, nay, of their lives, had languished under hard rulers, like the people of Israel under Pharaoh, groaning under a tyrannical devastation. . . . They call Simon a seducer and a traitor, but his deeds prove him to be a true man. Traitors fall off in time of need; they who do not fly from death are those who stand for the truth. . . .

The earl [Simon] had few men used to arms; the royal party was numerous, having assembled the disciplined and greatest warriors in England, such as were called the flower of the army of the kingdom; those who were prepared with arms from among the Londoners were three hundred set before several thousand, so they were contemptible to those, and were detested by those who were experienced. Much of the earl's army was raw; fresh in arms, they knew little of war. The tender youth, only now girded with a sword, stands in the morning in battle accustoming himself to arms; what wonder if such an unpracticed tyro [a beginner] would fear, and if the powerless lamb dread the wolf? Thus those who fight for England are inferior in military discipline, and they are much fewer than the strong men who boasted in their own valor, because they thought they would safely, and without danger, swallow up, as it were, all of the earl's helpers. Moreover, of those whom the earl had brought to the battle, and from whom he hoped for no little help, many soon withdrew from fear, and took flight as though they were amazed; and of three parts, one deserted. But the earl with a few faithful men never yielded. . . .

Lo! we are touching the root of the perturbation of the kingdom of which we are speaking, and of the dissension of the parties who fought the said battle. The objects at which these two parties aimed were different. The king, with his [supporters], wished thus to be free: . . . and they said he would cease to be king, deprived of the rights of a king, unless he could do whatever he pleased; they said it was no part of the duty of the magnates of the kingdom to determine whom he should prefer to his earldoms, or on whom he should confer the custody of castles, or whom he would have to administer justice to the people, and to be chancellor and treasurer of the kingdom. He wanted to have everyone at his own will, and counsellors from whatever nation he chose, and all ministers at his own discretion; while the barons of England were not to interfere with the king's actions, the command of the prince having the force of law, and what he may dictate binding upon everybody at his pleasure. For [they argued that] every earl also is thus his own master, giving to every one of his own men both as much as he will, and to whom he will; he commits

castles, lands, revenues, to whom he will; and although he be a subject, the king permits it all. Which, if he do well, is profitable to the doer; if not, he must himself see to it; the king will not hinder him from injuring himself. Why is the prince worse in condition, [they asked,] when the affairs of the baron, the knight, and the freeman, are thus managed? Therefore, [the king's supporters argued,] they who wish to diminish the king's power aim at making the king a slave, taking away his princely dignity; they wish by sedition to make the royal power captive and reduce it into guardianship and subjection, and to disinherit the king, making him unable to reign as fully as the kings who preceded him have done, who were in no way subjected to their people, but administered their own affairs at will, and conferred what they had to confer according to their own pleasure. This is the king's argument, which has an appearance of fairness, and this is alleged in defense of the right of the kingdom.

But now let my pen turn to the other side: let me describe the object at which the barons aim; and when both sides have been heard, let the arguments be compared, and then let us come to a final judgment, so that it may be clear which side is the truest. The people are more prone to obey the truer party. Let therefore the party of the barons speak for itself, and proclaim in order by what zeal it is led. In the first place, this party protests openly that it has no designs against the kingly honor; no, it seeks the contrary, and tries to reform and magnify the kingly condition, just as if the kingdom were ravaged by enemies, for then it would not be reformed without the barons, who would be the most capable and proper persons for this purpose; and should anyone then hang back, the law would punish him as a perjurer and traitor to the king, who owes to his lord, when he is in danger, all the aid he can give to support the king's honor, when the kingdom is, as it were, near its end by devastation.

The adversaries of the king are enemies who make war upon him, and counsellors who flatter the king, who seduce their prince with deceitful words, and who lead him into error by their double tongues: these are adversaries worse than those who are obstinate; it is these who pretend to be good while they are seducers, and procurers of their own advancement; they deceive the incautious, whom they render less vigilant by means of things that please them, whereby they are not provided against, but are considered as prudent advisers. Such men can deceive more than those who act openly, as they are able to make an outward appearance of being not hostile. What if such wretches, and such liars, should haunt the prince, capable of all malice, of fraud, of falsehood, excited by the spurs of envy, and should seek to do that extreme wickedness, by which they should sacrifice the

privileges of the kingdom to their own ostentation, and they should contrive all kinds of hard reasons, which by degrees should confound the commonalty, should bruise and impoverish the mass of the people, and should subvert and infatuate the kingdom, so that no one could obtain justice, except he who would encourage the pride of such men as these by large supplies of money? Who could submit to the establishment of such an injury? And if such men, by their conduct, should change the state of the kingdom; if they should banish justice to put injustice in its place; if they should call in strangers and trample upon the natives; and if they should subdue the kingdom to foreigners; if they should not care for the magnates and nobles of the land, and should place contemptible persons over them; and if they should overthrow and humiliate the great; if they should pervert and turn upside down the order of things; if they should leave the measures that are best, to advance those which are worst—do not those who act thus devastate the kingdom? Although they do not make war upon it with foreign arms, yet they fight with diabolical arms, and they violate the constitution of the kingdom in a lamentable manner. . . .

Thus, in order that none of the aforesaid things may happen, which may hinder peace and good customs, but that the zeal of the experienced men may find what is most expedient for the utility of the many, why is a reform not permitted, with which no corruption shall be mixed? For the king's mercy and the king's majesty ought to approve the endeavors which amend grievous laws so that they may be milder, and become less onerous to men but more pleasing to God. . . .

Since it is clear that the barons have a right to do all this, it remains to answer the king's arguments. The king wishes to be free by the removal of his guardians, and he wishes not to be subject to his inferiors, but to be placed over them; he wishes to command his subjects and not be commanded; he wishes to be humiliated neither to himself nor to those who are his officers. For the officers are not set over the king; on the contrary, they are rather the noble men who support the law. Otherwise there would not be one king of one state, but they to whom the king was subject would reign equally. Yet this inconvenience also, though it seems so great, is easily solved with the assistance of God: for we believe that God wills truth, and it is through him that we dissolve this doubt as follows. He by whom the universe is ruled in pure majesty is said to be, and is in truth, one king alone, who wants neither help whereby he may reign, nor even counsel, in as much as he cannot err. Therefore, all-powerful and all-knowing, he excels in infinite glory all those whom he has appointed to rule and, as it were, to reign under him over his people, who may

fail, and who may err, and who cannot avail by their own independent strength, and vanquish their enemies by their own valor, nor govern kingdoms by their own wisdom, but in an evil manner wander in the track of error. They require help and counsel which should set them right. The king says, "I agree to your reasoning; but the choice of these must be left to my option; I will associate with myself whom I will, by whose support I will govern all things; and if my ministers should be insufficient, if they lack sense or power, or if they harbor evil designs, or are not faithful, but are perhaps traitors, I desire that you will explain, why I ought to be confined to certain persons, when I might succeed in obtaining better assistance?" The reason of this is quickly declared, if it be considered what the constraint on the king is: constraint does not necessarily deprive of liberty, nor does every restriction take away power. Princes desire free power; those who reign decline miserable servitude. To what will a free law bind kings?—to prevent them from being stained by an adulterated law. And this constraint is not one of slavery, but is rather an enlargement of the kingly faculty. . . .

It is hard to love one who does not love us; it is hard not to despise one who despises us; it is hard not to resist one who ruins us; we naturally applaud him who favors us. It is not the part of a prince to bruise, but to protect; neither is it the part of a prince to oppress, but rather to deserve the favor of his people by numerous benefits conferred upon them, as Christ by his grace has deserved the love of all. If a prince love his subjects, he will necessarily be repaid with love; if he reign justly, he will of necessity be honored; if the prince err, he ought to be recalled by those whom his unjust denial may have grieved, unless he be willing to be corrected; if he is willing to make amends, he ought to be both raised up and aided by these same persons. Let a prince maintain such a rule of reigning, that it may never be necessary for him to avoid depending on his own people. The ignorant princes who confound their subjects will find that those who are unconquered will not thus be tamed. If a prince thinks that he alone has more truth, more knowledge, and more intelligence than the whole people, that he abounds more in grace and the gifts of God, if it be not presumption, but it be truly so, then his instruction will visit the true hearts of his subjects with light, and will instruct his people with moderation. . . .

Therefore, let the community of the kingdom advise; and let it be known what the generality thinks to whom their own laws are best known. Nor are all those of the country so uninstructed, as not to know better than strangers the customs of their own kingdom, which have been bequeathed from father to son. They who are ruled by the laws know those laws best; they who experience them are best

acquainted with them; and since it is their own affairs which are at stake, they will take more care, and will act with an eye to their own peace. They who want experience can know little; they who are not steadfast will profit the kingdom little. Hence it may be concluded that it concerns the community to see what sort of men ought justly to be chosen for the utility of the kingdom; they who are willing and know how, and are able to profit it, such men should be made the councilors and coadjutors of the king, to whom are known the various customs of their country, who feel that they suffer themselves when the kingdom suffers; and who will guard the kingdom, lest, if hurt be done to the whole, the parts have reason to grieve while they suffer along with it; who rejoice, when it has cause to rejoice, if they love it. . . . Therefore, let a prince seek such [councilors] as may condole with the community, who have a motherly fear lest the kingdom should suffer. But if anyone be not moved by the ruin of the many . . . he is not fit to rule over the many, since he is entirely devoted to his own interest, and to none other. A man who feels for others is agreeable to the community; but a man who does not feel for others, who possesses a hard heart, cares not if misfortunes fall upon the many—such walls are no defense against misfortunes. Therefore, if the king lacks the wisdom to choose by himself those who are capable of advising him, it is clear, from what has been said, what ought to be done. For it is a thing which concerns the community to see that miserable wretches not be made the leaders of the royal dignity, but the best and chosen men, and the most approved that can be found. For since the governance of the kingdom is either the safety or perdition of all, it is of great consequence who they are that have the custody of the kingdom, just as it is in a ship: all things are thrown into confusion if unskilled people guide it; if any one of the passengers belonging to it who is placed in the ship abuse the rudder, it matters not whether the ship be governed prosperously or not. So those who ought to rule the kingdom, let the care be given to them, if any one of the kingdom does not govern himself rightly; he goes on a wrong path which perhaps he has himself chosen. The affairs of the generality are best managed if the kingdom is directed in the way of truth. And, moreover, if the subjects labor to dissipate their property, those who are set over them may restrain their folly and temerity, lest by the presumption and imbecility of fools, the power of the kingdom be weakened, and courage be given to enemies against the kingdom. For whatever member of the body be destroyed, the strength of the body is diminished thereby. So if it be allowed even that men may abuse what belongs to themselves, when it be injurious to the kingdom, many others, immediately repeating the injurious liberty, will so multiply the wildness of error, that they will ruin the whole. Nor

ought it properly to be named liberty, which permits fools to govern unwisely; but liberty is limited by the bounds of the law, and when those bounds are despised, it should be known as error. . . . Therefore the king's argument concerning his subjects, who are ruled at their own choice by whom they will, is by this sufficiently answered and overthrown; since every one who is subject is ruled by one who is greater. For we say that no man is permitted to do all that he wishes, but that everyone has a lord who may correct him when he errs, and aid him when he does well, and who sometimes lifts him up when he falls. We give the first place to the community: we say also that the law rules over the king's dignity; for we believe that the law is the light, without which we conclude that he who rules will wander from the right path. . . . If the king lacks this law, he will wander from the right track; if he does not hold it, he will err foully; its presence gives the power of reigning rightly, and its absence overturns the kingdom. . . . It is commonly said, "As the king wills, so goes the law," but the truth is otherwise, for the law stands, but the king falls. Truth and charity and the zeal of salvation, this is the integrity of the law, the regimen of virtue: truth, light, charity, warmth, zeal. . . . Whatever the king may ordain, let it be consonant with these; for if it be otherwise, the commonalty will be made sorrowful; the people will be confounded, if either the king's eye lacks truth, or the prince's heart lacks charity, or he does not always moderately fulfill his zeal with severity.

These three things being supposed, whatever pleases the king may be done; but by their opposites the king resists the law. However, kicking against it does not hurt the spur; thus the instruction which was sent from heaven to Saint Paul teaches us. Thus the king is deprived of no inherited right, if there be made a provision in concordance with just law. For dissimulation shall not change the law, whose stable reason will stand without end. For this reason, if anything that is useful has been long put off, it is not to be criticized when adopted late. And let the king never set his private interest before that of the community, as if the salvation of all yields to him alone. For he is not set over them in order to live for himself; but that his people who are subject to him may be in safety. . . . Therefore if the prince will be warm with charity as much as possible toward the community, if he shall be solicitous to govern it well, and shall never rejoice at its destruction; wherefore if the king will love the magnates of the kingdom, although he should know alone, like a great prophet, whatever is needful for the ruling of the kingdom, whatever is becoming in him, whatever ought to be done, truly he will not conceal what he will decree from those without whom he cannot effect that which he will ordain. He will therefore negotiate with his people

about bringing into effect the things which he will not think of doing by himself. . . . Oh! if princes sought the honor of God, they would rule their kingdoms rightly, and without error. If princes had the knowledge of God, they would exhibit their justice to all. Ignorant of the Lord, as though they were blind, they seek the praises of men, delighted only with vanity. . . . From all that has been said, it may be evident that it becomes a king to see, together with his nobles, what things are convenient for the government of the kingdom, and what things are expedient for the preservation of peace; and that the king have natives for his companions, not foreigners or favorites for his councillors or for the great nobles of the kingdom, who supplant others and abolish good customs. For such discord is a stepmother to peace, and produces battles, and plots treason. For as the envy of the devil introduced death [into the world], so hatred divides the troop. The king shall hold the natives in their rank, and by this governance he will have joy in reigning. But if he seeks to degrade his own people, if he perverts their rank, it is in vain for him to ask why, thus deranged, they do not obey him; in fact they would be fools if they did.

Questions: How is the account of the battle used to support the rightness of the barons' cause? What does the baronial party want? What are the royalist arguments, and how does the author refute them? How is the political argument related to religious belief? How does this text compare with earlier articulations of royal power and its limits in the Policraticus *(doc. 45) and* Magna Carta *(doc. 50)?*

Fig. 33. Seals of Simon de Montfort and Eleanor de Montfort. Simon's seal shows him engaged in the aristocratic pursuit of hunting, carrying a horn and accompanied by a hound. The seal of his wife Eleanor, which identifies her as

countess of Leicester, likewise signals her high status through the inclusion of her family coat of arms.

57. The Miracles of Simon de Montfort

When Simon de Montfort was killed in battle at Evesham in 1265, royalists dismembered his body and distributed those grisly trophies to the earl's enemies. The local canons of Evesham buried what remained of Simon's corpse in their church, which became a shrine to the rebel leader; within a short time Simon was credited with hundreds of miracles, and many regarded him as a martyr. At the same time, as is clear from the miracles below, opinion about Simon's cult remained divided, since he had died an excommunicate and rebel. As pilgrims began traveling to Evesham to take earth from the battlefield or visit the earl's grave, Henry III moved to quash his adversary's cult in the Dictum of Kenilworth*, which forbade anyone to regard Simon as a saint or repeat stories of his "vain and fatuous marvels . . . on pain of bodily punishment."*

Source: trans. K.A. Smith from *The Chronicle of William de Rishanger of the Barons' Wars; The Miracles of Simon de Montfort,* ed. J.O. Halliwell (London: Camden Society, 1840), pp. 69, 81, 84, 89–90, 92–93, 99–100, 109–10.

A sick woman from Elmley sent her daughter to draw water from the earl's well [a spring said to have miraculously appeared on the battlefield at Evesham on the site of the earl's death]. Returning from the well, the girl met some servants from the castle who asked what she had in her pitcher. She told them it was new beer from Evesham, but they replied, "No, you have water from the earl's well." They insisted on drinking some, whereupon they discovered that it was beer, as she had said, and let the girl go. But when she returned to her sick mother, it once again changed into water, which the infirm woman drank and was healed.

A certain miracle recounted to us by William, the rector of Werinton, is worthy of remembrance. After the Battle of Evesham, he collected some earth from the spot where the earl's body had lain on the battlefield, and put it with some bread he had with him, and then gave the mixture as a holy sacrament to a mortally wounded layman. After the man had lain unconscious for two days, Earl Simon appeared to him in a dream and told him to ask the said William to take some of the hallowed earth and mix it with water for the wounded man to

drink. And when this was done, the wounded man recovered.

John of Coventry, surnamed Farber, fell ill and died. When his wife saw the dead man, she cried out, “O Simon de Montfort, if you have done any good for God, and just as we believe you were martyred in the name of justice, show your power and restore this man!” And at once the dead man began to breathe again, and miraculously recovered after he had bent a penny [a symbolic promise to visit Simon’s shrine and offer a coin there]. The whole village of Coventry can attest to this.

William de la Horste of Bulne told the following story about his neighbor, Robert the deacon. In the second year after the Battle of Evesham, it happened that the said William held a great banquet. A quarrel broke out among the guests concerning the late earl, and Robert slandered the earl excessively, saying all manner of evil things about him. His host, William, warned him not to speak ill of the earl. At this moment Robert lost the power of speech and became paralyzed, so that he could only sit there like a corpse. After the other guests prayed for him, he began once again to breathe, and, taking William’s advice, promised to say nothing further against the earl. Thus he escaped from danger.

Stephen of Hull, Nicholas of Hull, John Good, and Walter Sygard, citizens of Hereford, recounted a miraculous story about Philip, chaplain of Brentley, who slandered the earl. This Philip declared, among other insulting things, “If Earl Simon is a saint, as they claim, let the devil break my neck, or some other miracle happen before I arrive home.” And so it happened just as he had asked, for as he was returning home by chance he saw a hare, and while chasing it he fell from his horse. He had been seized by a demon as punishment for insulting the earl; his sanity gone, he was seized and bound, and so has remained in chains from the feast of Saint John the Baptist to the translation of Saint Benedict, as the citizens of Hereford can attest.

Sir Osbert Giffard had long been suffering from a fever when, one night, Earl Simon appeared to him in a dream, telling him, “Find the armor which you took from me in battle, put it on, and you will be healed.” Upon waking, Osbert ordered his servants to search among the armor lying at the foot of his bed; they duly located the piece in question, put it on him, and so he was healed. The abbot of Evesham testifies to this, and he heard it from the mouth of Osbert himself.

Margaret, wife of William Mauncelle of Gloucester, who for some time had been an enemy of the earl, was struck by an affliction known as frenzy and went completely out of her senses for two days. Earl Simon appeared to her in a vision and asked her, “Why do you always

speak ill of me?" Hearing this, that woman was moved to repent and beg his pardon for her wickedness. The earl pardoned her, and she asked him in turn what would happen to his enemies. He replied, "Some have repented, some will repent, and some will suffer an evil death without repenting." After this, the woman was measured to Simon [so that she might offer a candle as long as her body at Simon's shrine] and immediately recovered, as her neighbors testify.

A motet for the feast of Simon
Montfort and his companions:
Save us, Simon Montfort,
Flower of all knighthood,
Who endured the harsh pains of
death,

Protector of the English people.
The torments he endured while
alive,
Were unheard of among the saints,
So great was his suffering!
His hands and feet cut off,
His head and body gravely
wounded,
And his manly parts torn away.
Pray for us, Blessed Simon,
That we be made worthy of Christ's
promises.

Questions: What do the miracles tell us about the aftermath of the Second Barons' War? Do these stories help explain why Henry III was so eager to suppress Simon's cult? How do these miracles compare with those attributed to Thomas Becket (doc. 35)?

58. The Household Roll of Countess Eleanor of Leicester

The great households of medieval England were not only domestic spaces but venues for conspicuous consumption and hospitality, cultural patronage, and political maneuvering. In the thirteenth century it became customary for baronial households to keep written accounts of expenditures, and such records reveal how elites ate and drank, entertained, dressed, traveled, and maintained contact with friends and kin, while offering glimpses of humbler individuals—retainers, clerks, grooms, cooks, laundresses, messengers, and carters—whose

labor kept great households running. This example details the expenditures of Eleanor, countess of Leicester and younger sister of King Henry III. In 1238 Eleanor secretly married the royal favorite Simon de Montfort, with whom she had seven children. When the Second Barons' War broke out, Eleanor supported her husband against her royal brother. In the spring of 1265, the time period covered by these excerpts, Eleanor resided at Odiham Castle (Hampshire), a convenient base from which she remained in close contact with her husband, sons, and political allies. After her husband's death at Evesham in August 1265, Eleanor fled to the French nunnery of Montargis, where she died a decade later.

Source: trans. M.W. Labarge, *Mistress, Maids and Men: Baronial Life in the Thirteenth Century* (London: Phoenix, 2003), pp. 195–201.

[Daily Expenditures]

On Saturday following [2 May], for the countess and the above-mentioned: Grain, 5 bushels of froille [wheat flour]. Wine, 2 sesters [a sester equals 4 gallons], 3 gallons. Ale, previously reckoned. Kitchen: 300 herring from the castle stores. Fish, 3s. 6d. For 600 eggs, 22½d. Stable: Hay for 30 horses. Oats, 1 quarter [a quarter equals 9 bushels]. 7 bushels from the constable's purchase.

Sum, 5s. 4½d.

On Sunday following [3 May], for the countess and the above-mentioned: Grain, 6 bushels of froille. Wine, 3 sesters. Ale, previously reckoned. Kitchen: 1 ox and 1 pig from the castle stores; item, for 1 ox, 3 sheep, and 3 calves bought, 15s. 10d. Poultry, 5s. For 400 eggs, 15d. Milk for the week, 9 gallons from the castle. Stable: Hay for 30 horses. Oats, 2 quarters, 1 bushel from the constable's purchase. For 4 geese bought, 16d.

Sum, 23s. 5d.

On Monday following [4 May], for the countess and the above-mentioned: Grain, 6 bushels of froille. Wine, 3 sesters; taken with Seman, ½ sester. Ale, previously reckoned. Kitchen: Meat and hens previously reckoned, and 1 fresh ox, from the castle stores. 300 eggs, 11 ¼d. Stable: Hay for 36 horses. Oats, 2 quarters, 3 bushels, from the constable's purchase.

Sum, 11 ¼ d.

For the wages of the grooms, as appears on the back [of this roll], 15s. 2d. Grain for the poor for 8 days, ½ quarter, and 13 gallons of ale. Grain for the dogs for 10 days, 3 quarters.

Sum, 15s. 2d.

On Wednesday following [6 May], for the countess and the above-mentioned: Grain, 6 bushels of froille. Wine, 2½ sesters, ½ gallon. Ale, previously reckoned. Kitchen: Fish, 6s. 11d. Calf, 12d. For 400 eggs, 15d. Cheese for tarts, 9d. 50 herring from stores. Stable hay for 36 horses. Oats, 2 quarters, 3 bushels from the constable's purchase.

Sum, 9s. 8d.

On Thursday following [7 May], for the countess and the above-mentioned: Grain, 6 bushels of froille. Wine, 2 sesters, 3 gallons. Ale, for 36 gallons, 17d. Kitchen: For 1 ox and 1 sheep, 7s. Calf, 10d. Hens, 2s. 6d. For 300 eggs, 11¼d. Stable: Hay for 36 horses. Oats, 2 quarters. 2 bushels from the constable's purchase. Wax, from Friday the feast of Saint Mark [24 April; note that this is the clerk's error; the feast fell on 25 April] until now, 13 pounds; for the chapel, 3 pounds. ½ pound of pepper for the foals.

Sum, 12s. 8¼ d.

On Friday following [8 May], for the countess and hers, and Sir Richard of Havering: Grain, 5 bushels of froille. Wine, 2 sesters, 3 gallons. Ale, for 160 gallons, 10s. at ¾d. per gallon; item, for 200 gals., 7s. 8d. at ½d. per gal. Kitchen: 250 herring from stores. Fish, 4s. 4d. Eggs, 6d. Stable: Hay for 36 horses. Oats, 2 quarters, 6 bushels from the constable's purchase. For the carriage of ale, 4d.

Sum, 22s. 10d.

On Saturday following [9 May], for the Countess and hers: Grain, 5 bus. of froille. Wine, 2½ sesters; sent to Lady Catherine Lovel, 2 sesters; carried with Sir Richard the Chaplain, ½ sester. Ale, previously reckoned. Kitchen: 100 herring. Fish, 12s. 1d. Eggs 2s. 4d. 18 stockfish, for 3 days. Stable: Hay for 38 horses. Oats, 2 quarters, from the purchase of the constable.

Sum, 14s. 5d.

On Sunday following [10 May], for the countess, Lady Catherine Lovel

being present: Grain, 6 bushels of froille. Wine, 4 sesters; sent with the above- mentioned Lady, ½ sester. Ale, previously reckoned. Kitchen: Carcasses, 6s. 8d. Lard, 16d. Poultry, 5s. 8d. Eggs, previously reckoned. For the expenses of the dogs in taking 1 stag, by Michael of Kemsing, 6d. *Stable*: Hay for 32 horses. Oats, 2 quarters from the constable's purchase. For 4 geese 14 ½d.

Sum, 15s. 2½d.

For 2 quarters of malt wheat, 8 quarters, 2 bushels of malt barley, and 4 quarters of malt oats bought from Lady Wimarc of Odiham by the constable, soon after the countess's arrival, 43s. 9½d. For the expenses of William the Carter going to Porchester with 3 horses, to obtain 1 tun [a tun equals 252 gallons] of wine, 3s.

Sum, 46s. 9½d.

Wax delivered to Sir Richard of Havering by order of the countess, 20 pounds; for the household, 3 pounds.

[Miscellaneous Payments]

By Gobion

For 5 housings for the foals of the countess, bought by Richard Gobion	4s. 2d.
For cart-clouts, grease, and small harness for the long cart	20½d.
For the expenses of Robert de Conesgrave and 2 grooms with 2 horses, taking the robes of the king of Germany to Kenilworth, on Saturday after the finding of the Holy Cross [9 May]	2s.

By Seman

For 1 new cart bought, bound with iron, and another repaired, by Seman, on Rogation Monday [11 May]	34s.

Paid to John de Murcia, on the same day, by the same Seman	10s.
Given to the barber of Reading for coming twice to Odiham, with 1 horse hired for his use, to bleed a damsel [one of the Countess's companions]	2s. 8d.
For letters of the lord king and the countess carried to the prioress of Amesbury, by the same	4d.
For the expenses of W. the Carter seeking 1 tun of wine at Staines	12d.
For 2 pairs of shoes and 1 pair of hose, for the use of Robert de Valle	16d.
For the expenses of Seman going to Portsmouth	8d.
For the expenses of the same to Reading	12d.
For the shoes of Petronilla the laundress, of the Easter term	12d.
Given to Roger, the barber of the Lord Edward, on Rogation Monday [11 May], by order of the countess	14s. 4d.
For the expenses of Gobithesti going to the earl [the countess's husband, Simon de Montfort], on the vigil of the Ascension [13 May], with a guide and rented mount	2s.
On Ascension Day [14 May], given to the messenger of the countess of Isle, by order of the countess	12d.
On the following day [15 May], for the expenses of Bolettus going to Pevensey	8d.
On Saturday [16 May], for 2 grooms seeking a robe from Joce, at London for 3 days	8d.
For letters of the countess	4d.

carried to the countess of the Isle	
On Thursday after Ascension Day [21 May], given to a certain groom coming from William of Wortham	6d.
On the same day, for the expenses of Bolettus going to Pevensey	7½d.
For 1 gilded plate bought at London, of a weight of 17d., for the use of the Damsel Eleanor de Montfort [the countess's daughter]	2s. 10d.

[Wages]

Advanced to Perrot of the chamber on his wages of the 49th year, beginning at the feast of Saint Michael [29 September]	3s.
To Roger of the chamber, on the same	3s.
For 2 carts hired from London to Kenilworth, with 2 tuns of wine sent there by order of the countess in Pentecost week, with the expenses of Colin going with them	18s. 6d.

Wages paid from the Saturday before the feast of the Apostles Philip and James [25 April], on which day they were set to wages, to the Saturday following, with both days reckoned:

To 3 huntsmen of Sir Guy de Montfort, for 8 days, 3s. 4d., because the master takes 2d. a day, by order of the countess. To the huntsman of Sir Henry of Almain and his groom, 2s. 3d., for the master likewise, 2d. per day. To 2 grooms tending the foals of the countess for the same time, 2s. To two grooms for Sir Fulk Constable, 21d. To 1 groom for John Scot, 12d. To 1 groom for Andrew and Thomas Mabile, 12d. To 1 groom tending the sick horses, 12d. To 1 groom of Michael of Kemsing, for 6 days, 9d. To 1 groom tending the greyhounds of the countess, for 8 days, 12d. To 1 groom of Brother J., for the same time, 12d.

On Friday after Pentecost [29 May], to Gobithesti going to Hereford to the earl	18d.
On the same day, for carrying letters of the countess to Sir Richard of Demsing and returning to Porchester	7d.
For the expenses of 1 horse and a groom, seeking the barber of Reading and bringing him back	8d.
On Saturday [30 May], for Bolettus going to the countesses of the Isle and of Lincoln	6d.
On Sunday [31 May], for 1 groom going to Pevensey	1d.
For 1 horse hired for the use of Dobbe the Parker driving the countess by night to Portchester	10d.
Given to the carter of Wintney coming with the prioress's chariot to the same place	18d.
To 2 grooms of the abbot of Waverley coming with 2 palfreys	12d.
To Picard, messenger of the earl, on Wednesday after Trinity [3 June]	6d.
For the dinners of the grooms and carters	6d.
For the expenses of W. the clerk at London, for 4 days in Pentecost week	5s. 6d.
For 1 silk girdle for the use of Sir Amaury de Montfort, by order of the countess	3s.
For letters of the countess carried to Kenilworth on Friday after Trinity [5 June]	5d.
For the expenses of Hicqe the tailor going from Odiham to Kenilworth and returning to Portchester, on Trinity Sunday [31 May] for 5 days, with 14d.	3s. 10½d.

given for hiring 1 horse	
For a sheath for the knives of the countess	3d.
For baths at Odiham	3d.
For locks for the chests of the chandlery	2d.

For the countess's offerings from Easter [5 April] to the octave of Trinity [7 June], with the first day reckoned, 19s. 1d., by the hand of John Scot.

Questions: What were the key components of the household's diet? How much did it vary? How much of the food and fodder consumed was grown or raised on the countess's land, as opposed to bought? Apart from food, what were the household's major expenditures? How was social hierarchy manifested within the household? How did the countess keep in touch with the outside world?

59. Summonses to Parliament

During the turmoil of Henry III's reign (1216–72), the formal royal council, consisting of the barons and the higher clergy, was gradually enlarged to include representative knights, townsmen, and lower clergy. At the same time it came to be known by a new name, "Parliament." By the end of the century it was customary for all these groups to be included when the general business of the kingdom was to be discussed —though more selective groups might be summoned to advise the king on more specific items. The following writs from 1295 are typical parliamentary summonses issued by Edward I (r. 1272–1307).

Source: trans. E.P. Cheyney, *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, 1st ser. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Department of History, 1902), vol. 1, no. 6, pp. 33–35; revised.

Summons of a Bishop

The king to the venerable father in Christ, Robert, by the same grace archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, greeting. As a most just law, established by the careful providence of sacred princes, exhorts and decrees that what affects all should be approved by all, so also, very evidently should common danger be met by means provided in common. You know sufficiently well, and it is now, we believe,

divulged through all regions of the world, how the king of France [Philip IV] fraudulently and craftily deprives us of our land of Gascony, by withholding it unjustly from us. Now, however, not satisfied with the before-mentioned fraud and injustice, having gathered together for the conquest of our kingdom a very great fleet, and a vast multitude of warriors, with which he has made a hostile attack on our kingdom and the inhabitants of the same kingdom, he now proposes to wipe the English language from the earth altogether, if his power should correspond to the detestable proposition of the contemplated injustice, which God forbid. Because, therefore, darts seen beforehand do less injury, and your interest especially, as that of the rest of the citizens of the same realm, is concerned in this affair, we command you, strictly enjoining you in the fidelity and love which binds you to us, that on [13 November,] the Sunday after the feast of Saint Martin this coming winter, you be present in person at Westminster, citing beforehand the dean and chapter of your church, the archdeacons and all the clergy of your diocese, causing the same dean and archdeacons in their own persons, and the said chapter by one suitable proctor, and the said clergy by two, to be present along with you, having full and sufficient power from the same chapter and clergy, to consider, ordain and provide, along with us and with the rest of the prelates and principal men and other inhabitants of our kingdom, how the dangers and threatened evils of this kind are to be met. Witness: the king at Wangham, the thirtieth day of September.

Summons of a Baron

The king to his beloved and faithful relative, Edmund, earl of Cornwall, greeting. Because we wish to have a consultation and meeting with you and the rest of the principal men of our kingdom, in order to seek remedies against the dangers which in these days are threatening our whole kingdom, we command you, strictly enjoining you in the fidelity and love which binds you to us, that on [13 November,] the Sunday after the feast of Saint Martin this coming winter, you be present in person at Westminster, for considering, ordaining, and doing along with us and with the prelates, and the rest of the principal men and other inhabitants of our kingdom, whatever may be necessary for meeting dangers of this kind. Witness: the king at Canterbury, the first of October.

Summons of Representatives of Shires and Towns

The king to the sheriff of Northamptonshire. Since we intend to have a consultation and meeting with the earls, barons, and other principal

men of our kingdom with regard to providing remedies against the dangers which are in these days threatening the same kingdom, and on that account have commanded them to be with us on [13 November,] the Sunday after the feast of Saint Martin this coming winter, at Westminster, to consider, ordain, and do whatever may be necessary to avoid these dangers, we strictly require you to cause two knights from the aforesaid county, two citizens from each city in the same county, and two burgesses from each borough, of those who are especially discreet and capable of work, to be elected without delay, and to have them come to us at the aforesaid time and place.

Moreover, the said knights are to have full and sufficient power for themselves and for the community of the aforesaid county, and the said citizens and burgesses for themselves and the communities of the aforesaid cities and boroughs separately, then and there for doing what shall then be ordained according to the common counsel in the premises; so that the aforesaid business shall not remain unfinished in any way for defect of this power. And you shall have there the names of the knights, citizens and burgesses, and this writ. Witness: the king at Canterbury on the third day of October.

Questions: What is the main purpose of this parliament? How does it compare with what Magna Carta *(doc. 50) called the "common council of the kingdom?" Why has it changed? How do the writs to the bishop, baron, and sheriff differ? What do we learn about the upcoming parliament and its various members?*

60. London Coroners' Rolls

From the thirteenth century on, all sudden or unexpected deaths in England had to be investigated by the local coroner, and the testimony recorded in these cases gives us some of our most vivid glimpses into the daily activities of common folk. In the following cases, several aspects of the legal procedures surrounding an unexpected death are evident. The person who found a body (or witnessed the death) was obligated to notify the local authorities and to provide other people ("sureties" or guarantors) who would ensure his or her appearance in court as needed. Similarly, the nearest neighbors were also "attached" (required to give sureties for a court appearance). Of major concern to the investigators were the chattels, or moveable possessions, belonging to any suspect in a crime—because the chattels of a convicted felon would be forfeit to the king. The king also confiscated objects that had been the means of an accidental death. Finally, suspects who could get into a

church before being arrested could claim sanctuary, and the secular authorities would not touch them there, but they would never be able to come out again, unless they agreed to "abjure the realm" (to go immediately into exile from England).

Source: trans. H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth, and XVth Centuries* (London: Longmans, Green, & Company, 1868), pp. 1–19; revised.

Death of John Fuatard

On Thursday [19 March], the morrow of Saint Edward the king and martyr, . . . in [1276,] the fourth year of the reign of King Edward [I], Gregory de Rokesley, the chamberlain, and the sheriffs of the city of London were notified that one John Fuatard was lying dead, by a death other than his rightful death, in the house of John of Blechingley, in the parish of Saint Michael Candlewick Street, in the ward of Thomas of Basing. Upon hearing this, the chamberlain and sheriffs went there, and calling together the good men of that ward, and of the ward of John Horn, made diligent inquisition into how this happened.

These men say, on the fealty in which they are bound to our lord the king, that on [8 March,] the Sunday before the feast of Saint Gregory in this year, while the said John Fuatard and one John le Clerk were playing together [a game of] tiles in the churchyard of St. Mary in Southwark, the aforesaid John, who was clerk of St. Mary Magdalen in Southwark, when throwing the tile in his turn, and quite against his own will, struck John Fuatard with his tile on the right side of the head, making a wound two inches in length, and penetrating to the brain. Suffering from the effects of this, he lived from that Sunday until Saint Edward's Day [18 March], when, by reason of this wound, he died. When the body was viewed, no other wound, hurt, or bruise appeared upon it. Being asked what became of John after he did this, they say that he went immediately to the church of St. Mary Magdalen in Southwark, but has never since been seen in the city. Being asked about his chattels, they say that he had no goods or chattels.

And John of Blechingley was attached [required to provide two sureties for his cooperation], and Sarria, his wife, by two sureties; and John of Longmynd, who dwelt in the same house, by two sureties. And the first neighbor, Henry de Lyre, fishmonger, the second, Robert de Long, fishmonger, the third, Roger of Bedwell, skinner, and the fourth, Alan of Enfield Well, were attached, each by two sureties.

Death of Henry Green

On [14 June, the] Sunday before the feast of Saint Botolph in the year aforesaid, the chamberlain and sheriffs were notified that one Henry Green, water-carrier, was lying drowned in the River Thames, in the ward of Castle Baynard, in the parish of St. Andrew, and at the hithe [small harbor] of Castle Baynard. Upon hearing this, they went there, and having called together the good men of that ward, and of the ward of Simon of Hadstock, made diligent inquisition into how this happened.

These men say that on the preceding Thursday, the said Henry, having come to St. Paul's Wharf with a tub, and intending to take up water with the tub, attempted to place it upon the wharf; after which it so happened that, from the weight of the water in the tub, as he was standing upon the board of the aforesaid boat, the boat moved away from the wharf, and he fell between it and the quay into the water, and so by mischance was drowned. Being asked if they believe anyone else to be guilty or suspected of that death, or otherwise, they say that it was no other than a misadventure, as before stated. And the body was viewed; upon which no wound, hurt or bruise appeared. And the boat was appraised, with the whole of its tackle, and the tub, at 5s. 6d.

And the two neighbors nearest to the place where the mischance took place were attached, as were the two nearest neighbors to the place where the body was found.

Death of John le Hancrete

On [30 September, the] Wednesday after the feast of Saint Michael in the year aforesaid, the chamberlain and sheriffs were notified that one John le Hancrete was lying dead by a death other than his rightful death, in the house of William the Cooper in the ward of Anketil de Auvergne, in the parish of St. Brigid. Upon hearing which, the said chamberlain and sheriffs went there, and upon the oath of the good men of that ward diligent inquisition was made about this.

These men say that the said John came from a certain feast that had been held in the city of London to the house of the before-named William, being very drunk, that is, on the Monday before, at the hour of Vespers, where he had rented his bed by the day; and that then, intending to lie down upon it, he took a lighted candle for the purpose of making up his bed. When this was done, he left the candle burning and fell asleep on the bed. And the candle being thus left without anyone to look after it, its flame caught the straw of the bed upon which John was lying; and accordingly, he, as well as the bed and the

straw aforesaid, was burned, through the flame of the candle so spreading, at about the hour of midnight. And so, languishing from the effects of this, he lived until the next Tuesday following, at the hour of matins [after midnight], on which day and hour he died from the burning aforesaid. Being asked if they hold anyone suspected of John's death, they say they do not. And the body was viewed, upon which no wound or hurt appeared, except the aforesaid burns.

And the two nearest neighbors were attached, by sureties. And William the Cooper was attached, in whose house he was burned; and Fynea, the wife of the same William, was attached, and also Remund, the son of William.

Death of Matilda, Wife of Henry le Coffeur

On [12 February, 1277,] the Friday after Ash Wednesday, in the fifth year of the reign of King Edward, the said chamberlain and sheriffs were notified that one Matilda, wife of Henry le Coffeur, was lying dead, by a death other than her rightful death, in the house of the said Henry, in the parish of Saint Nicholas Shambles, in the ward of Anketil de Auvergne. On hearing which, the chamberlain and sheriffs went there, and having called together the good men of that ward, and of the ward of John of Blackthorn, made diligent inquisition about this.

These men say that as the said Matilda was coming from West Cheap toward the church guest hall, being drunk, she fell upon the pavement opposite the church of St. Martin, and so broke her right arm, upon the Sunday before Christmas, and immediately after the hour of curfew. Upon being carried from that place to her husband Henry's house, she survived in a deteriorating state from that day until the Monday before Ash Wednesday, on which day she died. They hold no one suspected. The body was viewed, upon which no injury appeared, except the broken arm, as aforesaid.

And the two nearest neighbors were attached, each by two sureties. And the said Henry was attached, in whose house she died, by two sureties.

Death of Simon of Winchester

On Monday [5 April 1277,] the morrow of the close of Easter, in the fifth year of King Edward, the said chamberlain and sheriffs were notified that one Simon of Winchester, taverner, was lying dead etc., in the parish of St. Martin, in Ironmonger Lane in the ward of Cheap, in a house belonging to Robert the surgeon, of Friday Street, in which house the said Simon kept a tavern. On hearing this, the chamberlain

and sheriffs went there, and calling together the good men of that ward and of Bassishaw, and of the ward of Henry de Frowke, made diligent inquisition into how this had happened.

The jurors say that on [5 December, 1276,] the eve of Saint Nicholas . . . , a dispute arose between the said Simon and a certain man who said that he was called "Roger of Westminster," and who was Simon's servant. And on the next day also, they were seen by the neighbors in the same house and tavern, abusing each other and quarreling, by reason of the same dispute; and on the same night they slept there, in the same room together. But as soon as this Roger saw that the said Simon was sound asleep, he seized a knife and cut Simon's throat completely through so that the head was entirely severed from the body. After this, he dragged the body out, and put it in a certain secret spot, a dark and narrow place between two walls in the same house, where coals were usually kept; this place was somewhat long, and not quite two feet wide. And on the following day, the same Roger, as was his custom, set out the bench of the tavern, and sold wine there. And as the said Simon had not been seen by the neighbors all that day, they asked Roger what had become of his master; whereupon he made answer that he had gone to Westminster, to recover some debts that were owing to him there; and on the second and third days he gave the same answer. At twilight, however, on the third day, he departed by the outer door, locking it with the key, and carrying off with him a silver cup, a robe, and some bedclothes, which had belonged to the same Simon. Afterward he returned, and threw the key into the house of Hamon Cook, a near neighbor, telling him that he was going to seek the said Simon, his master, and asking him to give him the key if he came back.

And from that day the house remained closed and empty until [31 December,] the eve of our Lord's circumcision following; that day John Doget, a taverner, taking with him Gilbert of Colchester, went to the house aforesaid to recover a debt which the said Simon owed to him for wines. But when he found the door closed and locked, he enquired after the key, of the neighbors who were standing about; hearing of this, Hamon immediately gave him the key. Upon entering the tavern with Gilbert, John found there one tun full of wine, and another half full, which he himself had sold to Simon for 50s., and this he at once ordered to be taken out by the porters . . . and put in a cart . . . and taken to his own house, for the debt due to him, together with some small tables, canvas cloths, gallons, and wooden potels [half-gallon measures], 2s. in value. This being done, John Doget shut the door of the house, carrying away its key with him; from that time the house was empty, no one having entered it until [16 March,] the Tuesday before Palm Sunday. Upon that day, the aforesaid Master

Robert, to whom the house belonged, came and broke open the door for lack of a key, and so entering it, immediately put Michael le Oynter in possession of it. This Michael, on [3 April,] the Saturday in Easter week, went there alone, to examine all the facilities belonging to the house, and see which of them needed to be cleansed of filth and dust. But when he came to the narrow and dark place aforesaid, he found the headless body there, and seeing it, he sent word to the chamberlain and sheriffs.

Being asked if anyone else lived in the house, other than those two persons, or if anyone else had been seen or heard in that house with them on the night the felony was committed, or if any other person had had frequent or special access to the house by day or night, from which mischief might have arisen, they say not beyond the usual resort that all persons have to a tavern. Being asked if the said Roger had any well-known or special [friend] in the city, or outside it, to whose house he was accustomed to go, they say they understand that he had not, seeing that he was a stranger, and had been in the service of this Simon hardly a fortnight. Being asked therefore where he had taken the goods he had carried off, they say that, seeing that the house was near to the Jewry [the neighborhood where the Jews lived], they believe that he took them to the Jewry; but to whose house they know not. Being asked what became of the head so cut off, they say they know not, nor can they ascertain anything about it. They say also that the said Roger escaped by stealth, and has not since been seen. He had no chattels.

And the four nearest neighbors were attached, by sureties, as were all the persons whose names are above-mentioned.

Death of William le Pannere

On Friday [21 January, 1278], the morrow of Saints Fabian and Sebastian, in the sixth year of the reign of King Edward, son of King Henry, Gregory de Rokesley, chamberlain of London, and John Adrien and Walter the English, sheriffs of the same city, were notified that one William le Pannere, skinner, was lying dead in the market of West Cheap, near the Conduit in the ward of Cheap. On hearing this, the chamberlain and sheriffs went there; and calling together the good men of that ward, and of the ward of Henry de Frowyk, where he lived, made diligent inquisition into how this happened.

These men say that while the said William, on the Friday before-mentioned, was passing through the middle of West Cheap, and had reached the place where he was now lying dead, being greatly weakened through having been bled [for medical reasons or to

promote general wellness] on Thursday, the before-mentioned feast, and having had too much blood taken from him through excessive bleeding, he fell upon the pavement and suddenly died. They hold no one suspected of the death of the said William, his death being thus sudden. And the body being viewed, there was no wound or hurt found upon it.

And Joanna, the wife of the dead man, was attached, by two sureties. The two neighbors were also attached, who dwelled next to him, as were the two neighbors who lived nearest to the Conduit, where he was found dead.

Death of Henry of Llanfair

[In May 1278,] the said chamberlain and sheriffs were notified that one Henry of Llanfair was lying dead in the house of Sibil le Feron, in the ward of Cheap, in the parish of Colechurch. Upon hearing this . . . and having called together the good men of that ward, and of the ward of John of Blackthorn, and the ward of Henry de Frowyk, they made diligent inquisition about this.

These men say that one Richard of Codesfold fled to the church of St. Mary Staining Lane in London, by reason of a certain robbery being imputed to him by one William of London, cutler, and the same William pursued him on his flight there. It so happened that on the night [of 5 May], in the present year, there were many persons watching about the aforesaid church, to catch him in case he came out, and a certain Henry of Llanfair, ironmonger, one of the persons on the watch, hearing a noise in the church, and so fearing that the same Richard was about to get out by another part of the church, and so escape through an opening that there was in a certain glass window therein, went to examine it. The said Richard and one Thomas, who was then the clerk of that church, perceived this, and the said Thomas, seizing a lance (without an iron head), struck at Henry through the hole in the window, and wounded him between the nose and the eye, penetrating almost to the brain. From the effects of which wound he suffered until [19 May,] the day of Saint Dunstan, when he died at about the third hour. They say also that both Richard and Thomas are guilty of that felony, seeing that Richard was consenting in it.

And the said Thomas was taken, and imprisoned in Newgate [Prison], and afterward delivered before Hamon Haweteyn, justiciar of Newgate. And the said Richard still keeps himself within the before-named church. Being asked if they hold any more persons suspected as to that death, they say they do not. [The suspects] have no lands or chattels. And the body was viewed, upon which no other injury or

wound was found, save only the aforesaid wound.

And the two neighbors nearest to the spot where he was wounded were attached, as were the two neighbors nearest to the place where he died; and the said Sibil was attached, in whose house he died.

Death of William Cole

On Thursday [11 August, 1278], the morrow of Saint Laurence the martyr, in the sixth year of the reign of King Edward, the chamberlain of our lord the king in the same city, and the sheriffs, were notified that a certain man, William Cole by name, a citizen of London, was lying dead, by a death other than his rightful death, in the ward of William of Hadstock, and the parish of St. Dunstan, near the Tower of London. On hearing this, the chamberlain and sheriffs went there, and calling together the good men of the ward and of the two nearest wards, namely those of Wolmar of Essex and Nicholas of Winchester, made diligent inquisition into how this had happened.

These men say that on [27 July,] the Wednesday after the feast of Saint James the Apostle, the said William was in the fields of the village of Stratford [near London], getting in his corn [grain]; and that one John (whose surname they do not know), parish-clerk of the same village, came into the same fields on that day, and secretly took and carried off certain sheaves [bundles of grain] belonging to the said William and certain neighbors of his. Whereupon it so happened that the said William met this same John, and rebuked him for carrying off the sheaves, and took them away from him, upon which the said John went to one Richard, chaplain to the prioress of Stratford (but as to whose surname they are ignorant), and also to one John de Scheld, and made grievous complaint to them that the said William had taken the sheaves away from him. Being greatly moved at this, they went to the aforesaid fields, and finding the said William there, suddenly rushed upon him and threw him on the ground, beating him with sticks both behind and in front, all over the body, from his neck down to the soles of his feet, and then left him in the fields for dead. Afterward, he was carried to the village of Stratford, where he lay suffering from the effects of those blows, down to [6 August,] the Saturday before the feast of Saint Laurence. On that day he was carried in a cart to London, and still lived on from that day to Thursday [11 August,] the morrow of Saint Laurence, early in the morning of which he died, from the before-mentioned blows.

And the body was viewed, which was black and blue all over, and quite crushed by excessive and most grievous blows, from the neck down to the soles of the feet, as before-mentioned. Being asked what became of [the suspects], after committing the felony aforesaid, they

say that they fled forthwith to the parish church of the same village, and afterward secretly escaped from it, and have never since been found. Being asked if they hold anyone else suspected of his death, they say they do not, but only the before-named Richard the chaplain, and John de Scheld; who on hearing the complaint of the before-mentioned John the clerk, went off in haste to the fields to avenge him. But whether the same John [the clerk] was present when the said William was so slain, or whether he gave any blow, they cannot ascertain. Being asked about the goods and chattels of those felons, they say that they know nothing about them, because [the felons] are foreigners [not Londoners].

And the four nearest neighbors were attached, by sureties.

Questions: What procedures are followed in these cases? What are the standards of evidence? In what situation did people who committed homicide find themselves? What do these records tell us about everyday life in thirteenth-century London? What kinds of social bonds and social stresses do we see at work? What role did drink and drunkenness play in everyday life and death?

61. Plan of the Village of Wharram Percy

During the two-and-a-half centuries after the Norman Conquest, as the population of England grew from perhaps 2 million to 4.5 million or more, the countryside was more densely settled and the land more intensively exploited. The majority of English men and women remained peasants living in small settlements such as that of Wharram Percy in North Yorkshire. Archaeological excavations carried out at Wharram Percy between 1950 and 1990 added substantially to our understanding of medieval English peasant life. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the site comprised thirty-seven longhouse-style dwellings, each surrounded by a farmyard and a long, narrow croft where inhabitants cultivated fruits, vegetables, and legumes. Houses, constructed of wood crucks and frames with walls of mud and straw, included long, narrow living spaces with open fire pits, and designated areas to shelter valuable animals. The tofts faced a central street and a common green, and were surrounded by open fields. The village was abandoned around 1500 during England's wool boom, when the surrounding lands were repurposed for grazing sheep.

Source: M. Beresford and J. Hurst, *Wharram Percy: Deserted Medieval Village* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 49.

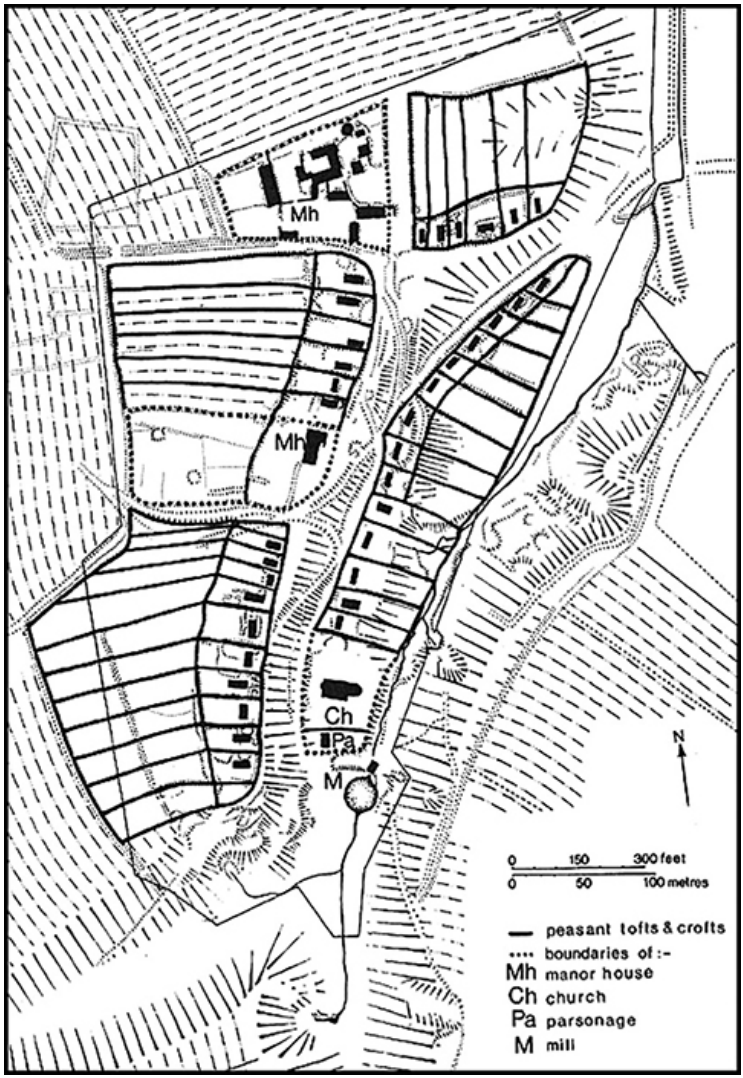

Fig. 34. Plan of Wharram Percy, reconstructed on the basis of multiple twentieth- century excavations of the site.

Questions: How would the village layout have facilitated community bonds? What tensions might the layout have encouraged? What values and hierarchies are discernible in the plan?

62. Manorial Life, from the Hundred Rolls

In 1279 the royal government launched a census of land tenures in a large number of English counties, organized by

hundreds (subdivisions of shires). The resulting records, known as the Hundred Rolls, are like Domesday Book *in giving us a remarkably detailed picture of the conditions on individual manors, including the terms on which named individual peasants farmed their land. Here are the results from the manor of Alwalton in Huntingdonshire.*

Source: trans. E.P. Cheyney, *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, 1st ser. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Department of History, 1896), vol. 3, no. 5, pp. 4–7.

The abbot of Peterborough holds the manor of Alwalton and vill from the lord king directly; which manor and vill with its appurtenances the lord Edward, formerly king of England, gave to the said abbot and convent of that place in free, pure, and perpetual alms. And the court of the said manor with its garden contains one-half an acre. And to the whole of the said vill of Alwalton belong 5 hides and a half and 1 virgate of land and a half; of which each hide contains 5 virgates of land and each virgate contains 25 acres. Of these hides the said abbot has in demesne 1 hide and a half of land and half a virgate, which contain as above. Likewise he has there 8 acres of meadow. Also he has there separable pasture which contains 1 acre. Likewise he has there 3 water mills. Likewise he has there a common fish-pond with a fish-weir on the bank of the Nene, which begins at Wildlake and extends to the mill of Newton and contains in length 2 leagues. Likewise he has there a ferry with a boat.

Free Tenants. Thomas le Boteler holds a messuage with a courtyard which contains 1 rood [a quarter acre], and 3 acres of land, by charter, paying thence yearly to the said abbot 14s.

Likewise the rector of the church of Alwalton holds 1 virgate of land with its appurtenances, with which the said church was anciently endowed. Likewise the said rector has a holding the tenant of which holds 1 rood of ground by paying to the said rector yearly 1d.

And the abbot of Peterborough is patron of the church.

Villeins. Hugh Miller holds 1 virgate of land in villeinage by paying thence to the said abbot 3s. 1d. Likewise the same Hugh works through the whole year except 1 week at Christmas, 1 week at Easter, and 1 at Whitsuntide [Pentecost, forty days after Easter], that is in each week 3 days, each day with 1 man, and in autumn each day with 2 men, performing the said works at the will of the said abbot as in plowing and other work. Likewise he gives 1 bushel of wheat for benseed and 18 sheaves of oats for foddercorn [feed for animals]. Likewise he gives 3 hens and 1 cock yearly and 5 eggs at Easter. Likewise he does carrying to Peterborough and to Jakele and nowhere

else, at the will of the said abbot. Likewise if he sells a brood mare in his courtyard for 10s. or more, he shall give to the said abbot 4d., and if for less he shall give nothing to the aforesaid. He gives also merchet [a payment upon his daughter's marriage] and heriot [a death tax], and is tallaged at the feast of Saint Michael [29 September], at the will of the said abbot. There are also there 27 other villeins, viz. John of Ganesoupe, Robert son of Walter, Ralph son of the reeve, Emma at Pertre, William son of Reginald, Thomas son of Gunnilda, Eda widow of Ralph, Ralph Reeve, William Reeve, William son of William Reeve, Thomas Flegg, Henry Abbot, William Hereward, Serle son of William Reeve, Walter Palmer, William Abbot, Henry Serle; each of whom holds 1 virgate of land in villeinage, paying and doing in all things, each for himself, to the said abbot yearly just as the said Hugh Miller. There are also 5 other villeins, viz. Simon Mariot, Robert of Hastone, Thomas Smith, John Mustard, and William Carter, each of whom holds half a virgate of land by paying and doing in all things half of the whole service which Hugh Miller pays and does.

Cotters. Henry, son of the miller, holds a cottage with a croft which contains 1 rood, paying yearly to the said abbot 2s. for it. Likewise he works for 3 days carrying hay and doing other works at the will of the said abbot, each day with 1 man, and in autumn 1 day in cutting grain with 1 man.

Likewise Ralph Miller holds a cottage with a croft which contains a rood, paying to the said abbot 2s.; and he works just as the said Henry.

Likewise William Arnold holds a cottage with a croft which contains half a rood, paying to the abbot 2d.; and he works just as the said Henry.

Likewise Hugh Day holds a cottage with a croft which contains 1 rood, paying to the abbot 8d.; and he works just as the said Henry.

Likewise Sara, widow of Matthew Miller, holds a cottage and a croft which contains half a rood, paying to the said abbot 4d.; and she works just as the said Henry.

Likewise Sara, widow of William Miller, holds a cottage and a croft which contains half a rood, paying to the abbot 4d.; and she works just as the said Henry.

Likewise William Kendale holds a cottage and a croft which contains 1 rood, paying to the abbot 8d.; and he works just as the said Henry. . . . [Here ten other cottars are named, their holdings, varying from a half rood to an acre, specified, and their payments and services indicated.]

Likewise William Drake holds a cottage with a croft which contains half a rood, paying to the abbot 6d.; and he works just as the said

Henry.

There are there also 6 other cotters, viz. William Drake Jr., Amycia the widow, Alice the widow, Robert son of Eda, William Pepper, and William Coleman, each of whom holds a cottage with a croft which contains half a rood, paying and doing in all things, each for himself, just as the said William Drake.

Likewise William Russel holds a cottage with a croft which contains half a rood, paying to the abbot 8d.; and he works in all things just as the said Henry Miller.

There are, moreover, 5 other cotters there, viz. Walter Pestel, Ralph Shepherd, Henry Abbot, Matilda Tut, and Jordan Mustard, each of whom holds a cottage with a croft which contains half a rood, paying thence and doing in all things to the said abbot just as the said William Russel.

Likewise Beatrice of Hampton holds a cottage and a croft which contains 1 rood, paying to the abbot 12d.; and she works in all things just as the said Henry.

Likewise Hugh Miller holds 3 acres of land, paying to the abbot 42d.

Likewise Thomas, son of Richard, holds a cottage with a croft which contains half a rood, and 3 acres of land, paying to the abbot 4s.; and he works just as the said Henry.

Likewise Ralph Reeve holds a cottage with a croft which contains 1 rood, and 1 acre of land, paying to the abbot 2s.; and he works just as the said Henry.

Likewise each of the said cottagers, except the widows, gives yearly after Christmas a penny which is called head-penny.

Questions: What is the population of the manor? What obligations do the peasants have to their lord? What goods does the manor produce? How does the position of individual peasants vary? What do we learn about women's roles within the rural economy?

63. The Statutes of Merton College, Oxford

Scholars had gathered in the city of Oxford by the mid-twelfth century; in the early thirteenth century such academic communities in a number of European cities organized themselves into the new universities, which continued to grow over the centuries to come. Oxford's university was made up of small colleges and halls of scholars, such as Merton College, founded in 1274 by the document excerpted below.

Source: trans. A.F. Leach, *Educational Charters and Documents, 598*

to 1909 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), pp. 181–87; revised.

1. Of the Grant of the Manors of Maldon and Farleigh

In the name of the most glorious and undivided Trinity, Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

I, Walter of Merton, clerk, formerly chancellor of the illustrious lord the king of England, trusting in the goodness of the great maker of property and possessions, confidently relying on the grace of him who disposes the desires of men to good and directs them at his will, and after anxiously turning over in my mind what I can contribute to the honor of his name in return for those things which he has abundantly contributed to me in my life, before the disturbances that lately arose in England founded and established a house, which I wished and directed should be entitled or called "of the Scholars of Merton," on my own property acquired by my own labors at Maldon in the county of Surrey, for the perpetual maintenance of scholars studying in the schools, for the health of my soul . . . , [and] now, when the peace of England has been re-established and the former disturbances have been quieted, with stable mind I approve, establish and confirm, and grant and assign to them the place of their habitation and house at Oxford, where a university of students flourishes, on my own land adjoining Saint John's church; which I wish to be called "the House of the Scholars of Merton" and in it I decree the scholars shall dwell forever. And to this house, or to the scholars forever dwelling in the same, by the grant of the highest, I have transferred my manors of Maldon and Farleigh with their appurtenances, which I gave in the time of disturbance, for the perpetual maintenance of the same scholars and the ministers of the altar who shall reside there, and now, when the peace of the realm has been restored, I grant and approve and with deliberate judgment ratify and confirm the same transfer of my own free will. And I decree that these manors with other property acquired or to be acquired by me for them shall always remain with the same scholars and brethren in the form and on the conditions underwritten to be continually observed in time to come, the Lord willing, as regards the persons as well as their rule of life.

2. Of the Lawyers and Scholars Living in the House

This form, then, I constitute and decree to be for ever observed, that in this house, called the House of the Scholars of Merton, there shall forever be scholars devoted to learning, and bound to devote their

time to the study of arts, philosophy, canon law or theology. And the greater part of them shall devote themselves to the study of the liberal arts and philosophy, until at the will of the warden and fellows, as being persons who have been laudably proficient in them, they transfer themselves to the study of theology. But four or five of them shall be allowed by the provision of their superior, he declaring that they are able and apt for this, to study canon law. And the same superior may dispense them for a time to hear lectures in civil law if it shall appear expedient. There shall be also in the assembly a grammarian who shall devote his whole time to a grammar school, and books and other necessaries shall be provided for him from the possessions of the house; and he shall have the care of those who are applying themselves to the study of grammar; and even the seniors, if they have any doubts in their own faculties, shall have resort to him without blushing; and under his mastership the scholars themselves, if and when it shall seem to be for the benefit of their own readiness, shall speak Latin or the vulgar idiom [French], and he shall be bound to instruct each of them faithfully to the utmost of his ability. . . .

7. Of the Deans' Duties, etc.

Some of the more discreet of the aforesaid scholars shall be elected to take charge, under the warden and as his assistants, of the less advanced and oversee their progress in learning and conduct. So that over every twenty, or ten, if necessary, there shall be a president, and more ample provision as appears proper shall be made for them while they diligently fulfill their charge of the rest. Also, in each chamber in which the aforesaid scholars live there shall be one older than the rest, who shall superintend his fellows, and shall report to the warden of the house himself and the rest of the prepositors having charge and to the assembly of scholars itself, if necessary, on their progress in morals and studies.

8. Of the Scholars' Table

Moreover, the scholars studying in the house shall have a common table under the warden and other prepositors, the twenty men and deans, and also as far as possible a uniform dress.

40. Of the Education of the Boys, etc.

But whereas I have exchanged the succession to which my heirs and kindred were entitled in my freehold property by the custom of the

realm for this charity, under the eye of God, as aforesaid, I will and decree that if any little ones of the aforesaid kindred become orphans or otherwise, through their parents' poverty, lack support while they are receiving primary instruction in the rudiments, then the warden shall have up to thirteen of them educated in the aforesaid house, until they can become proficient in the university, if they shall be found to be capable; and from these, those who are found able and fit shall be taken to fill the places of the scholars, as set out above.

And lest there should break out in the said house or society, the plague which through the temptations of the flesh so often vexes the incautious, all service in the said house, at least in the court of the house of the scholars and of the manor of Maldon and elsewhere, as far as may be, shall always be done by men. . . .

Questions: What are Walter's reasons for founding the college? Who will the students and teachers be? What do we learn of the curriculum? How will the college be organized? Who is included in, and who is excluded from, the college?

64. Roger Bacon's Account of his Academic Career

The great English scholar Roger Bacon lectured at the universities of Oxford and Paris before joining the Franciscans around 1256. As a Franciscan friar at a time of official concern about unorthodox teachings and writings within the order, he was bound by a general ban on Franciscans disseminating their work. But in 1266 Pope Clement IV, impressed by Bacon's reputation, wrote to him requesting a summary of his work. In response, Bacon produced three books in less than two years. The excerpts below describe his reaction to the papal order and various aspects of his academic career.

Source: trans. G.G. Coulton, *Social Life in Britain from the Conquest to the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), pp. 130–36; revised.

To the most holy father and lord Pope Clement, supreme pontiff by the grace of God, your servant writes as follows, kissing in spirit the blessed feet of your holiness. . . .

I recall how for ten years I have now been an exile from that fame which I formerly won in the schools; and I recognize my own littleness, my manifold ignorance, my stammering speech and scratching pen. With all this I wonder at your wisdom, which now deigns to demand works of philosophy from me who am now unheard

of among all men, as though I were already buried and eaten up by oblivion. . . . The head of the Church has made a request of the unworthy sole of the Church's foot; the vicar of Christ and governor of the whole world deigns to solicit me, who am scarcely to be reckoned among the atoms of the universe! . . . My gratitude is not small; nay, it behooves me to be the most grateful of men, since your holiness has requested of me that very thing which I have yearned for with burning desire, which I have toiled for with bitter sweat, which I have pushed forward at great expense. Nevertheless, the foundations are not yet laid—the very stones and timber—until I shall have diligently investigated the mastery of sciences and languages, and other things requisite for building the edifice of wisdom. For the marvels of arts and sciences are subject to so many difficulties (and especially in these times of ours, when we are waiting for the days of Antichrist and his followers, on whose behalf the Devil is full of fury, that he may in diverse ways confound the study of wisdom, as I shall make plain in the later pages of my book) that only the prudence of the pope can remedy the situation. . . .

But this delay was necessary, and against my own will, who grieved then and grieve still at this. For, when you last wrote, the things which you believed me to have written had not yet been composed. In truth, before I became a friar, I composed no philosophical book; nor, since I came into this order, have I ever been asked to do so by those who are in authority over me. Nay, a grievous constitution has even been made to the contrary, under pain of loss of our book and of several days' fasting on bread and water, if any writing done in a friary be communicated to others. But I could not get it copied in a fair hand except by scribes who are not friars; and such scribes would then make copies for themselves or for others, whether I wished it or not, even as things are so frequently published at Paris through the copyists' frauds. Certainly, if I had been able to communicate my writings freely, I would have composed many books for my brother, who is a student, and for others of my friends. But when I saw no hope of publication I neglected to write. Wherefore, when I offered myself to your highness as ready, you must know that this meant I was ready to write books not yet written. . . . Nevertheless, the greatness and authority of your reverence kept me long idle, since at first I did not know what I could offer which would be worthy of your attention. Then, considering that nothing but something magnificent should be presented to your highness, . . . it is no wonder that I delayed in setting to work. . . . For the treatise on optics alone, which I send you here, could not be written by anyone else in less than a year . . . , nay, nor in less than ten. For, however well he knew the matter, he would need to make many experiments

concerning these things, and to practice an almost infinite number of described figures, which demand much time, and to write it all out five or six times until he had one tried and trustworthy book. I say nothing here of other and greater subjects, until a more convenient time.

To this I add other, far more grievous causes of delay, which often drove me almost to despair. Truly, I thought of breaking off my work a hundred times; and, had it not been for the reverence due to the vicar of Christ, and the profit of mankind which could be procured through him alone, I would not have gone through with these impediments in this business—nay, not for all the churchmen in the world, however they might have sought me out and insisted.

The first impediment came through those who are set over me. Since you wrote nothing to them on my behalf, and since I could not nor should not reveal your secret to them, they press hard upon me, with unspeakable violence, that I, like the rest, should obey their will; which I could not do, bound as I was by your command to proceed with your work, notwithstanding any contrary command of my prelates. Know, therefore, that, not being excused by you, I was involved in more and more grievous hindrances than I can tell. . . .

Another kind of hindrance, which alone was enough to ruin the whole project, was my lack of money. For I had to spend more than 60 pounds in Parisian money in this matter, which I will fully account for in its own place. I marvel not that you had no thought of these expenses, seeing that you, sitting aloft over the whole world, must need think of so many weighty affairs that no man can measure the cogitations of your heart. . . . I myself, as you know, neither have money nor can have money; nor, by consequence, can I borrow, since I have no means of repaying. I sent therefore to my rich brother in our own country; but he, having taken the king's part [in the Second Barons' War], was driven from his home together with my mother and brothers and the whole family; nay, he was often seized by the enemy and ransomed. For this reason he was too impoverished and ruined to aid me, nor have I had any answer from him even unto this present day.

Considering, therefore, your reverence's command, I solicited many great folk—some of whom you know well by face, but not their inward mind— saying that I had to carry out certain business for you in France (which business I did not complete) which could not be performed without great expense. But no tongue can tell how many of these men called me shameless, how many repulsed me, how many lured me with false hopes, and what confusion I suffered. Nay, not even my friends would believe me, seeing that I was unable to explain this business to them; thus this way was barred to me. At last,

therefore, in greater anguish than I can express, I compelled poorer friends to give me succor, constraining them to spend all their substance, and to sell much and raise the rest through pledges, even often at usury; and I promised them that I would render you a full and faithful account of the expenses, and pledged my faith to procure full payment from you. . . .

My fourth reason [for thus insisting] is on my own account; for I have labored in many ways at science from my youth onwards, and at languages, and at all the aforesaid branches of learning; whereby I have collected much profitable learning and have also ordered other folk in that way. For I have sought the friendship of all wise men in this western world, and have caused young men to be instructed in tongues and figures and numbers and tables and instruments and many necessary things. And I have examined all things that are requisite to this work, and know now how we must proceed, and by what means, and what hindrances we must face; but how to proceed I know not, for lack of the aforesaid funds.

Yet, if any man would expend as much as I myself have already expended in my life, certainly a great part of the work might be completed. For during those twenty years when I labored especially in the study of wisdom, neglecting the opinions of the common sort, I expended more than £2,000 sterling on these things—on secret books, and various experiments, and languages and instruments and tables and such like matters; and also in seeking the friendship of wise men and in teaching others who should help me in languages, in figures, in numbers, in tables, in instruments, and in many other things. . . .

Nevertheless, since your wisdom has so long been busied in church affairs and in various cares for the state, and since no man on the throne of the apostles can find much time for studies, and these things of which I write are very difficult and foreign to the sense of many men—therefore I was more solicitous to find a fit mediator for presentation to your reverence, than for the words of my own writings. . . . Wherefore I set my thoughts on a certain poor youth whom, some five or six years ago, I caused to be instructed in languages and mathematics and optics, wherein is the whole difficulty of the things which I now send. Moreover, I taught him freely by word of mouth, after receiving your command, since I felt that I could find none other at present who knew my mind so well. For this reason I decided to send him to you, as a ready mediator if your wisdom should deign to make use of him; and, if not, he could still carry my writings to your majesty. . . . He came to me in poverty, as a mere boy; I had him nourished and taught for the love of God, especially since I had found no other youth so able both for study and for [practical] life. And he has profited so far that he might earn all that

he needs in great abundance, and better than any other scholar of Paris, although his age be only twenty years or twenty-one at most. . . .

Nor is it only for that cause that I send this messenger; but also that you may see how nothing is difficult to a man of diligence and confidence, though a negligent or craven-spirited scholar shuts himself away from all that is good. For this youth came to me at the age of fifteen, and in poverty, having neither livelihood nor sufficient masters nor patron to take pity on his destitution; nor did he learn for as long as a single year, since he must needs work as servant to those who gave him the necessities of life; nor in his studies did he find for two whole years any man who would teach him a single word; notwithstanding all of these impediments, he now knows a great deal by reason of his own confidence and diligence. . . . Thus I am fully persuaded that there is no difficulty of youth or of learning which may not be overcome, if men have the will to learn, as well as the confidence and diligence. Nor is there any such difficulty in languages or sciences, but only in teachers of these subjects themselves, who either will not or cannot teach. For, from our youth onwards, we find no profitable teachers; and therefore we languish our whole lives, and end by knowing very little. But if we had capable teachers, I am sure that we should learn more in one year than we now learn in twenty—all of which I am ready to prove in practice; and I will stake my head on my plan's success.

I have labored much in sciences and languages. For forty years have I now labored since first I learned the alphabet; and I was always studious; and for all but two years of those forty I have constantly been at the university; and I have spent much money, as others commonly do. Yet I am assured that within a quarter of a year, or half a year at most, I could teach with my own mouth all that I know to a resolved and confident man, provided only that I had first written a compendious manual to follow. Yet it is well known that no man has labored in so many languages and sciences as I, nor has labored so hard to master them; for, before I became a friar, men marveled that I could live through such excessive labor; yet afterward I have been as studious as before; not, indeed, that I have worked so hard, for it was no longer necessary, by reason of my exercise in wisdom.

Questions: What obstacles did Bacon face in his scholarly career? How did he overcome them? Of what is he particularly proud? What are his present worries? What do we learn from him about the world of the early universities?

65. The Conquest of Wales

Norman knights established marcher lordships throughout much of Wales in the late eleventh century, but native Welsh princes reversed these advances by the late twelfth century. Henry III (r. 1216–72) stepped up efforts to enforce royal authority over Wales, and a new precedent was set in 1267 when the Welsh prince, Llwelyn ap Gruffud, agreed do homage to Henry and pay tribute in exchange for confirmation of his lands and title. Llwelyn alienated Henry's son Edward I (r. 1272–1307) by repeatedly refusing to renew his homage and persisting in an alliance with the rebel de Montfort family, giving Edward an excuse to invade Wales. Edward's major campaigns in 1276–77 and 1282–83 led to the loss of Welsh independence, the imposition of English law, and the building of towns for English settlers, protected in turn by an "iron ring" of great stone castles. The following account comes from by William Rishanger, an English monk of St. Albans who wrote around 1300.

Source: trans. K.A. Smith, from William Rishanger, *Chronica,* in *Chronica et annales regnantes Henrico tertio et Edwardo primo*, ed. H.T. Riley (London: Longman & Company, 1865), pp. 85–88, 90–92, 97–105.

In this year [1275] a Parliament was held at London, and messengers were sent to invite Llwelyn, prince of Wales, who had earlier scorned to attend the king's coronation. And when the royal messengers admonished him to come in person and render the homage he owed to the king, he pretended that he did not dare enter England on account of the plots of some powerful men who served the king. And, thus, to guarantee his safety, the prince of Wales demanded as hostages the king's son, Earl Gilbert of Gloucester, and Robert Burnell, the king's chancellor. This angered the king, but nevertheless he brought the Parliament to completion, keeping the matter secret. . . . After the Parliament, he set out for Chester on the Welsh border, so that Prince Llwelyn could approach him more freely, and he sent messengers to the prince a second time, demanding that he do homage. When Llwelyn refused to obey the royal order, the king deposed the prince and summoned his army with the aim of taking his lands by force. . . .

In the year 1276, the countess of Leicester, widow of Simon de Montfort and sister of King Henry [III] of England, who had fled to France after the death of her husband and taken up residence among the Dominican nuns at Montargis [an abbey founded by her late husband's sister], sent her daughter across the sea to Wales. She had been betrothed to Prince Llwelyn while her father was still living, and the girl's brother Amaury was assigned to serve as the prince's proxy

in the marriage ceremony. Her party sailed to England on a suspicious journey, and their ship was sighted off the Scilly Islands off the Cornish coast, where it was unexpectedly overtaken by four vessels from Bristol. The travelers were seized and brought to the English king, who honorably detained the girl in the queen's court, and kept her brother Amaury under guard, though not in chains, first at Corff Castle and later at Sherborne Castle. . . .

[In 1277] the king of England, advancing with his army from Chester into Wales, began work on the castle which is called Rhuddlan, and sent into western Wales a nobleman named Payen de Chensi, who laid waste to the land with fire and sword. . . . In that time the people of western Wales came to the English king seeking peace, and restored the castle of Stredewy and the surrounding lands to Payen, the leader of the king's army in that region.

The prince of Wales, seeing that he could no longer resist the English king, who grew stronger every day, sought to make peace with him, and it was made on the following terms. All the Welsh captives who the English king held in chains were to be released and pardoned. Item, in order to have peace and the king's goodwill, Llwelyn will pay 50,000 pounds sterling, and in return will receive the king's goodwill and grace. Item, that the Four Cantrefs [the lands between the Rivers Conwy and Dee in the eastern part of Gwynedd], together with all those lands conquered by the king and his men, except the island of Anglesey, will remain unconditionally and in perpetuity under the rule of the king of England and his heirs. The island of Anglesey is granted to the prince, who will pay the king 1,000 marks a year for it, with payment to begin next Michaelmas, and he will give a further 5,000 marks to the king as an entry fine. And if the prince should die without heirs, the king of England will take possession of that island. Item, that the prince will come to England at Christmas to do homage to the king. Item, that the entire homage of Wales should remain with the king, with the exception of the five baronies within the borders of Snowdonia, since Llwelyn could not rightly be called "prince" if he did not have some barons serving him. Item, that he may retain the title of prince for his lifetime, and after his death the five aforesaid barons will do homage to the king of England and his heirs, in perpetuity. And in order to ensure that this is done, he has handed over as hostages ten Welsh noblemen, who risk imprisonment, the alienation of their lands, and the end of their freedom. And the nobility from all of the Cantrefs and Snowdonia have sworn on holy relics that if the prince ever breaks the aforesaid terms of peace, they will abandon him and act as his enemies until, having been so admonished, he mends his ways.

On account of this treaty the prince made peace with his brothers

whom he had harmed. For he had three brothers, two of whom, Owain and Rhodri, he had thrown in prison; the third, Dafydd, was forced to flee and remained for many years with the king of England, by whom he was knighted in that war—contrary to the custom of that people—for his goodness and loyalty, and was given great rewards by the king. The king had granted Dafydd the castle of Denbigh in Wales, with lands valued at £1,000 a year, and had besides given him as a wife the recently widowed daughter of the earl of Derby. By the king's favor Owain was released from prison, and Rhodri fled from his brother and died in England. The king built a strong castle at Lampader Vaur in western Wales, to combat the raids of the Welsh. To pay for this war, the king's people granted him a subsidy of the twentieth part of their goods. . . .

Around that same time [in 1278], the king of England gave the daughter of Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, who (as was described earlier) had been captured by the men of Bristol and brought to the king, to the prince of Wales as his wife. The king paid for the wedding ceremony himself and he and the queen honored the occasion with their presence. . . .

In that year [1281], the prince of Wales's brother Dafydd, forgetting the kindnesses of the English king who had promoted him and protected him from his brother's persecutions, incited nearly all of Wales to rise up in rebellion against the king. And since the Welsh prince and nobles were easily swayed to sedition, Dafydd added to his first crime by treacherously seizing that noble and famous knight Roger de Clifford, whom the king had appointed Justiciar of Wales, in his castle at Hayward on Palm Sunday. When certain of Roger's knights tried to resist, the unarmed men were cut down. After returning to his brother the prince, David raised an army, marched to Rhuddlan, and besieged the king's castle there.

The king was celebrating Easter in Devizes, in the diocese of Sarum, when rumors of this uprising reached him. He ordered his army to be mustered as quickly as possible, and dispatched those troops he already had with him to Rhuddlan. Then the king secretly went to Amesbury to visit his mother, who was then living there. . . . The next day, with his mother's leave, the king hastened to join the troops he had sent ahead into Wales. When he heard of the king's arrival, the prince of Wales raised the siege of Rhuddlan and fled to a safe distance. Meanwhile, the castle of Lampader Vaur was captured by Rhys ap Maelgwn and Gryffin ap Maredudd, and many other castles in those regions were taken by other Welsh nobles. . . . In that time the archbishop of Canterbury traveled to Snowdonia and diligently tried to convince the prince of Wales and his brother to make peace, but having failed, he returned to England and

pronounced the sentence of excommunication against them. . . .

In the year 1282, the king set out from Rhuddlan for Anglesey with a strong army, advancing toward Snowdonia. To make a way for his troops to cross the arm of the sea dividing the island from the mainland, he ordered boats lashed together to make an invincible bridge. . . . In that time the army of Gilbert de Clare, the earl of Gloucester, inflicted a great defeat on the Welsh in open battle at Lantilowhyr. Most of the Welsh were killed, while the count himself lost only five knights, including William of Valencia the younger, a relative of the English king. His army scattered by the earl of Gloucester, the prince of Wales entered the lands of Cardigan and Stredewy and laid waste to the lands of Rhys ap Maredudd, who had sided with the English king against the prince. The prince next moved toward Builth, where he left the main body of the Welsh army with a small number of men. When he and his companions arrived at Builth, suspecting nothing, they were attacked and killed by two noblemen, John Giffard and Edmund Mortimer. This happened on [11 December,] the Friday before the feast of Saint Luke. One of the men present recognized the prince's body and cut off his head, which he sent to the English king. The head was displayed on the Tower of London, crowned with ivy.

Two monks wrote verses about the aforesaid Llwelyn. Here is what the Welsh monk wrote:

> Here lies the tormentor of the
> English, Snowdonia's defender,
> Llwelyn, prince of the Welsh,
> Beyond reproach was his behavior.
> This jewel of his age, a blossom of
> kings past,
> Was a model for kings yet to come,
> His people's leader, law, and light to
> the last.

And here is what the English monk wrote:

> Here lies the prince of errors, a cruel
> plunderer,
> Traitor to the English, a burning
> firebrand and robber.
> Savage war-god of the Welsh, cruel
> murderer,
> Evil scourge of good Christians,
> Last dreg of the Trojans' forsaken

lineage.

Questions: What do we learn about the characters of Edward I and Llwelyn? Why did Edward invade Wales in 1276 and 1282? How did the English king assert his authority in Wales? Where does the chronicler reveal his bias? How might a Welsh chronicler have narrated these events?

66. Edward I's Confirmation of Charters

Edward I (r. 1272–1307) called frequent Parliaments and considered them a tool of royal government. Generally a strong and successful king, he faced a crisis in the 1290s in which he needed Parliament's support, and this led him to grant the following confirmation of Magna Carta*, with some new concessions, in 1297.*

Source: trans. G.C. Lee, *Source-Book of English History: Leading Documents* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1900), pp. 184–85; revised.

1. Edward, by the grace of God king of England, lord of Ireland, and duke of Aquitaine, to all those that shall hear or see these present letters, greeting: Know that we, to the honor of God and of the holy Church, and to the profit of our realm, have granted for us and our heirs that the Charter of Liberties and the Charter of the Forest, which were made by common assent of all the realm, in the time of King Henry [III] our father, shall be kept in every point without breach. And we will that the same charters shall also be sent under our seal to our justices of the forest as to others, and to all sheriffs of shires, and to all other officers and to all our cities throughout the realm, together with our writs, in which it shall be contained that they cause the aforesaid charters to be published, and declare to the people that we have confirmed them in all points, and that our justices, sheriffs, mayors, and other officials, which under us have the laws of our land to guide, shall allow the said charters pleaded before them in judgment in all their points; that is to wit, the Great Charter as the common law and the Charter of the Forest according to the assize of the forest, for the welfare of our realm.
2. And we will that if from now on any judgment be given that is contrary to the points of the charter aforesaid, by the justices or by any other of our officials that hold pleas before them, it shall

be null and void.

3. And we will that the same charters shall be sent under our seal to cathedral churches throughout our realm, there to remain, and shall be read before the people twice a year.

4. And that all archbishops and bishops shall pronounce the sentence of greater excommunication against all those that by word, deed, or counsel, do contrary to the aforesaid charters, or break or undo them in any point. And that the said courses be denounced and published by the aforesaid prelates twice a year. And if the same prelates or any of them be remiss in denouncing the said sentences, the archbishops of Canterbury and York for the time being, as is fitting, shall compel and distrain them to make that denunciation in the aforesaid form.

5. And because diverse people of our realm fear that the aids and tasks which they have given to us in the past toward our wars and other business, of their own grant and good-will, however they were made, might become a bondage to them and their heirs, because they might be at another time found in the rolls, and so likewise the prises [confiscations] taken throughout the realm by our ministers; we have granted that neither we nor our heirs shall draw such aids, tasks, nor prises, as a custom, because of anything that has been done in the past, whether it be by roll or any other precedent that may be found.

6. Moreover, we have granted for us and our heirs, as well to archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, and other folk of holy Church, as also to earls, barons, and to all the commonalty of the land, that from now on we will only take such manner of aids, taxes or prises by the common consent of the realm, and for its common profit, except for the ancient aids and prises due and accustomed.

7. And for as much as the great part of the commonalty of the realm is sorely aggrieved by the maletote of wools, that is to wit, a toll of 40s. for every sack of wool, and have petitioned us to release the same, we have clearly released it at their request, and have granted for us and our heirs that we shall not take such thing or any other without their common assent and good will, saving to us and our heirs the custom of wools, skins, and leather granted before by the commonalty aforesaid. In witness of which things we have caused these our letters to be made patent. Witness: Edward, our son, at London, the tenth day of October, the twenty-fifth year of our reign.

And let be it remembered that this same charter in the same

terms, word for word, was sealed in Flanders under the king's great seal, that is to say at Ghent, the fifth day of November in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of our aforesaid lord the king, and sent into England.

Questions: Clauses 5 and 6 are considered the most important parts of this document. What do they promise? What are the implications of such a promise? How does the document show that Magna Carta *was still politically important?*

Chapter Five

An Age of Disasters, 1300–1399

Fig. 35. Coins of Richard II. Through the twelfth century, the only coins minted in England were silver pennies. Larger denominations were introduced in the thirteenth century and became standard in the fourteenth. The groat was worth four pence; half-groats and gold coins worth 6s. 8d. (half a mark) were also used. These coins of Richard II, shown in nineteenth-century engravings, have the usual portrait of the current king on the front; the inscription on the obverse identifies the town or city where the coin was minted. The smallest is a penny minted at York; the others are a half-groat and groat minted at London.

67. Parish Life in the Diocese of Exeter

The religious lives of medieval laypeople focused on the parish church, where they attended mass with kin and neighbors, baptized their children, buried their dead, and celebrated feast days with processions and communal meals. The clergy were required to keep the church's chancel (the east end which housed the altar) in good repair, while the parishioners maintained the nave (the west end) and churchyard, and furnished the service books, vestments, and mass implements necessary for the liturgy and sacraments. Each parish was under the authority of a bishop, who (at least in theory) sent out representatives to visit the parishes in his diocese. The following excerpts are from such a visitation to the diocese of Exeter in 1301.

Source: trans. G.G. Coulton, *Social Life in Britain from the Conquest to the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), pp. 260–62; revised, with additional material trans. K.A. Smith from *The Register of Walter de Stapeldon, Bishop of Exeter (A.D. 1307–1326)*, ed. Rev. F.C. Hingestone-Randolph (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1892), pp. 107, 111.

Clyst Honiton. There is no psalter or antiphonary [a book containing chants for the divine office], the lectionary [a book of scriptural readings for the office] is badly bound, and the missal is in

poor condition. There is no chalice, and the rest of what is in the church is insufficient for the service. The chancel is in terrible condition; a large portion of it has collapsed, so that the divine office cannot be celebrated properly at the high altar.

They [the parishioners] say that their parish priest is of honest life and good conversation, and has been there 22 years, honestly fulfilling his priestly office in all that pertains to a parish priest; but he is now broken with age and unable to carry out his duties in the parish. They further say a certain Alice, wife of Simon Luke, is a known adulteress, who freely gives herself to all who desire her, and that she often gave herself to a certain official on the manor of Poltimor. When this man arrived in the village there was a great uproar, so that Alice's husband, fearing him, would not remain. Nor has the local *firmarius* [the official who collected rents due to the church on behalf of an ecclesiastical landlord, such as a bishop, and acted on the landlord's behalf] corrected her, so that the parishioners fear that great harm will arise from their association with her, and appeal to the *firmarius* that Alice be corrected or removed.

Colyton. In the main church there is an adequate psalter, with a prayer book and capitulary [a book of readings for the office] for the use of the vicar, and another psalter for the use of the parishioners, which is old and of no value. . . . [The visitors list eight additional liturgical books in the church's collection.] There is a large chalice, partly gilded, and another chalice of the same size for the altar of the Blessed Virgin, as well as a third, smaller one. There are five complete sets of vestments, and one which is lacking a stole, as well as one adequate cope [a cloak worn by a priest] and another that is old and in poor condition, and a tunic with a silk dalmatic. There are seven frontals [decorative cloth hangings] for the altar, as well as other ornaments: three banners, a hanging for use during Lent . . . two processional crosses made of metal, two small candelabra for processions, one worn surplice [a long tunic worn by a priest], another of no value, and a third in good condition, a lidded ivory pyx [a container for the consecrated host] missing its closure, a lead chrismarium [container for holy oil], and four ampullae. There is no lantern-tower, and the chancel lacks a proper roof.

They say that Sir Robert [Blond], their vicar, is an honest man and preaches to them as best he knows how, but not sufficiently, as they think. They say also that his predecessors were accustomed to call in the preaching friars to instruct them for the salvation of their souls; but this vicar does not care for them, and if by chance they do come, he will not receive them, nor give them any help; for which reason they beseech that he may be reprimanded. They further assert that all of the chaplains and clerks are of honest life, as well as chaste.

Dawlish. They say that the vicar, whom they hold to be a good man, does not reside personally in the parish, but has in his place Sir Adam, a chaplain, who bears himself well and honestly and teaches them excellently in spiritual things. But Randolph the Chaplain has kept his concubine for ten years or more, and though often rebuked, he persists incorrigibly. The parish clerk is continent and honest.

St. Mary's Church. The parishioners say that, until the time of the present vicar, they were accustomed to keep the chancel in good repair and were immune from paying tithes for the restoration of the church; but the present vicar, though he does not maintain the chancel, still receives the tithe and compels them to pay. Item, they say that Agnes Bonatrix left 5 shillings in pollard coin [a coin worth half its face value] for the upkeep of St. Mary's church, which the vicar received and still keeps. Item, Master le Roger left a certain sum of money to the same end, which the said vicar is said to have received in part. Item, they say that the vicar feeds his beasts in the churchyard, so that it is evilly trodden down and vilely defouled. Item, the said vicar takes for his own use the trees blown down in the churchyard. Item, he causes his malt to be malted in the church, where he also stores his wheat and other goods; and as a result his servants go in and out and leave the church door open, so that when it is stormy the wind blows into the church and damages the roof. They say, moreover, that he preaches well and exercises his office laudably in all things, when he is present. But often he goes to stay at Moreton-Hamptead for a week or two, so that they have no chaplain, except when Sir Walter, the archdeacon's chaplain, is present, or some other casual chaplain is procured.

Questions: What did parishioners expect of their clergy? What tensions existed in these parishes? How different were the material conditions of wealthier churches and poorer ones? How might these differences have affected medieval parishioners' experiences?

68. Correspondence of the Queen with London

The records of London include transcripts of many letters received, such as this one from Edward II's queen, Isabel of France, announcing the birth of the future Edward III in 1312. The records also describe the celebrations that resulted.

Source: trans. H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth, and XVth Centuries* (London: Longmans, Green, & Company, 1868), pp. 105–7; revised.

"Isabel, by the grace of God, queen of England, lady of Ireland, and

duchess of Aquitaine, to our well beloved, the mayor, and aldermen, and the commonalty of London, greeting. Since we believe that you would willingly hear good tidings of us, we make known to you that our Lord, of his grace, has delivered us of a son on the thirteenth day of November, with safety to ourselves, and to the child. May our Lord preserve you. Given at Windsor, on the day above-named."

The bearer of this letter was John de Falaise, tailor to the queen; and he came on [14 November,] the Tuesday next after the feast of Saint Martin, in the sixth year of the reign of King Edward [II], son of King Edward [I]. But as the news had been brought by Robert Oliver on the Monday before, the mayor and the aldermen, and great part of the commonalty, assembled in the guildhall at the hour of Vespers [about six in the evening], and danced, and showed great joy at the news, and so passed through the city with great glare of torches, and with trumpets and other minstrelsies.

And on the Tuesday next, early in the morning, it was announced throughout all the city that there was to be no work, labor, or business in shop on that day, but that every one was to apparel himself in the most becoming manner that he could, and come to the guildhall at the hour of Prime [about six in the morning], ready to go with the mayor, together with the [other] good folks, to St. Paul's, there to make praise and offering, to the honor of God, who had shown them such favor on earth, and to show respect for this child that had been born. And after this, they were to return all together to the guildhall, to do whatever might be enjoined.

And the mayor and the aldermen assembled at the guildhall, together with the good folks of the commonalty; and from there they went to St. Paul's, where the bishop chanted mass with great solemnity on the same day; and there they made their offering. And after mass, they led carols in the church of St. Paul, to the sound of trumpets, and then each returned to his house.

On the Wednesday following, the mayor, by assent of the aldermen, and of others of the commonalty, gave to the said John de Falaise, bearer of the letter aforesaid, £10 sterling and a cup of silver, 4 marks in weight. And on the morrow, this same John de Falaise sent back the aforesaid present, because it seemed to him too little.

On the Monday following, the mayor was richly costumed, and the aldermen arrayed in like suits of robes; and the drapers, mercers, and vintners were in costume; and they rode on horseback from there to Westminster, and made their offering there, and then returned to the guildhall, which was excellently well tapestried and dressed out, and there they dined. And after dinner, they went out caroling throughout the city for all the rest of the day, and a great part of the night. And

on the same day, the Conduit in Cheap ran with nothing but wine, for all those who chose to drink there. And at the cross just by the church of Saint Michael in West Cheap, there was a pavilion extended in the middle of the street, in which was set a tun of wine, for all passers-by to drink of, who might wish for any.

On [5 February, 1313,] the Sunday after Candlemas . . . , the fishmongers of London were costumed very richly, and they caused a boat to be fitted out like a great ship, with all manner of tackle belonging to a ship; and it sailed through Cheap as far as Westminster, where the fishmongers came, well mounted, and presented the same ship unto the queen. And on the same day, the queen set out for Canterbury, on a pilgrimage to that shrine; and the fishmongers, all thus costumed, escorted her through the city.

Questions: What kinds of activities are part of the celebrations? In what other ways is the city's joy expressed? How are the people of London organized? Why is the celebration so large?

69. *The Manner of Holding Parliament*

This early fourteenth-century treatise is an interesting but not entirely accurate description of how Parliament operated. Though well informed on details of procedure, the anonymous author portrays Parliament as more standardized than it was in practice, and the first paragraph, on the origins of this thirteenth-century institution, is entirely fictitious. In an age when custom often had the force of law, claiming antiquity for current (or favored) practices was an effective way of promoting them. This author reveals himself as a supporter of broad representation and the power of Parliament as opposed to that of the king.

Source: trans. T.D. Hardy, *Modus tenendi parliamentum; An Ancient Treatise on the Mode of Holding the Parliament in England* (London: Eyre & Spottiswood, 1846), pp. 2–46; revised.

Here is described the way the Parliament of the king of England and his Englishmen used to be held in the time of King Edward [the Confessor], the son of King Æthelred; which method was recited by the more select men of the kingdom before William, duke of Normandy, both conqueror and king of England, the Conqueror himself commanding it, and it was approved by him and used in his own times, and also in the times of his successors, kings of England.

The Summoning of the Parliament

The summoning of the Parliament ought to precede the first day of the Parliament by forty days. . . .

Concerning Difficult Cases and Judgments

When any dispute, question, or difficult case, whether of peace or war, shall arise in or out of the kingdom, the case shall be related and recited in writing in full Parliament, and be dealt with and debated there among the peers of the Parliament, and if it be necessary it shall be enjoined by the king, or on his behalf if he is not present, to each rank of peers, that each rank proceed by itself, and the case shall be delivered in writing to its clerk, and in an appointed place they shall cause him to recite the case before them, so that they may order and consider among themselves how it may be better and more justly proceeded in as they shall be willing to answer before God for the king's person and their own persons, and for the persons of those whom they represent; and they shall report their answers and advice in writing, so that, all their answers, counsel, and advice being heard on all sides, it may be proceeded in according to the best and soundest counsel, and where at least the major part of Parliament agrees. . . .

Concerning the Business of the Parliament

The business for which the Parliament is held ought to be deliberated on according to the calendar of Parliament, and according to the order of petitions delivered and filed, without respect to persons, but who first proposes shall first act. In the calendar of Parliament all business of the Parliament ought to be regarded in the following order: first, concerning war, if there be war, and other affairs touching the persons of the king and queen and their children; secondly, concerning the common affairs of the kingdom, such as making laws against the defects of original laws, judicial and executorial, after judgments rendered, which are chiefly common affairs; thirdly, private business ought to be considered, and this according to the order of the filing of petitions as is aforesaid.

Concerning the Days and Hours of Parliament

The Parliament ought not to be held on Sundays, but it may be held on all other days, except three, namely All Saints [1 November], All Souls [2 November], and the nativity of Saint John the Baptist [24 June]. And it ought to begin at midprime on each day, at which hour the king and all the peers of the realm are bound to be present at the

Parliament; and the Parliament ought to be held in a public and not in a private or obscure place. On festival days the Parliament ought to begin at the hour of prime [the first hour of daylight] on account of divine service.

Concerning the Ranks of Peers

The king is the head, beginning, and end of Parliament, and he has no peer in his rank, and so the first rank consists of the king alone; the second rank is that of the archbishops, bishops, abbots, and priors holding by barony; the third rank is of the procurators of the clergy; the fourth is of the earls, barons, and other magnates and nobles, holding land to the value of a county or barony . . . ; the fifth is of the knights of shires; the sixth is of the citizens and burgesses. And so Parliament is composed of six ranks. But it must be known that even if any of the said ranks, below the king, is absent, if they have been summoned by reasonable summonses of Parliament, the Parliament shall nevertheless be considered complete.

Concerning the Opening of the Parliament

The lord king shall sit in the middle of the larger bench, and is bound to be present at prime, on the sixth day of the Parliament. And the chancellor, treasurer, barons of the exchequer, and justices are accustomed to record defaults made in Parliament in the following order: on the first day the burgesses and citizens of all England shall be called over, on which day if they do not come, a borough shall be amerced 100 marks and a city £100; on the second day the knights of shires of all England shall be called, on which day if they do not come, their county shall be amerced £100; on the third day of the Parliament the barons of the Cinque Ports shall be called, and afterward the barons, and afterward the earls, when, if the barons of the Cinque Ports do not come, the barony from which they were sent shall be amerced 100 marks; in the same manner a baron by himself shall be amerced 100 marks, and an earl £100; in like manner shall be done with those who are peers of earls and barons . . . ; on the fourth day the procurators of the clergy shall be called, on which day if they do not come, their bishops shall be amerced 100 marks for every archdeaconry making default; on the fifth day the deans, priors, abbots, bishops, and lastly the archbishops, shall be called, who, if they do not come, shall be amerced each archbishop £100, a bishop holding an entire barony 100 marks, and in like manner with respect to the abbots, priors, and others. On the first day proclamation ought to be made, first in the hall or monastery, or other public place where

the Parliament is held, and afterward publicly in the town or village that all who wish to deliver petitions and complaints to the Parliament may deliver them from the first day of the Parliament for the next five days.

Concerning the Preaching before the Parliament

An archbishop, or bishop, or eminent, discreet, and eloquent clerk, selected by the archbishop in whose province the Parliament is held, ought to preach on one of the first five days of the Parliament in full Parliament, and in the presence of the king, and this when the greater part of the Parliament is assembled and congregated, and in his discourse he ought in due order to enjoin the Parliament that they with him should humbly beseech God and implore him for the peace and tranquility of the king and kingdom. . . .

Concerning the Declaration in Parliament

After the preaching the chancellor of England, or the chief justice of England, that is, he who holds pleas before the king, or some fit, honorable, and eloquent justice or clerk elected by the chancellor and chief justice, ought to declare the causes of the Parliament, first generally, and afterward specially, while standing. And it is to be observed that all in Parliament, whoever they are, shall stand while they speak, except the king, so that all in Parliament may be able to hear the speaker. And if he speaks obscurely or in a low voice he shall speak over again and louder, or another shall speak for him.

Concerning the King's Speech after the Declaration

The king, after the declaration for the Parliament, ought to entreat the clergy and laity, naming all their degrees, that is, the archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, archdeacons, procurators, and others of the clergy, the earls, barons, knights, citizens, burgesses, and other laymen, that they diligently, studiously, and cordially will labor to deal with and deliberate on the affairs of Parliament as they shall think and perceive how this may best and principally be done, in the first place according to God's will, and afterward for the king's and their own honor and welfare.

Concerning the King's Absence from Parliament

The king is bound by all means to be personally present in Parliament,

unless hindered by bodily infirmity, and then he can keep to his chamber, as long as he does not lie out of the manor or at least the town where Parliament is held, and then he ought to send for twelve of the greater and better persons who are summoned to Parliament, that is, two bishops, two earls, two barons, two knights of shires, two citizens, and two burgesses to visit him and testify about his condition. . . . The reason is that clamor and murmurs used to arise in Parliament on account of the king's absence, because it is a hurtful and dangerous thing for the whole commonalty of Parliament, and also for the realm, when the king is absent from the Parliament. . . .

Concerning the Places and Seats in the Parliament

First, as is aforesaid, the king shall sit in the middle place of the greater bench, and on his right hand shall sit the archbishop of Canterbury, and on his left hand the archbishop of York, and immediately after them the bishops, abbots, and priors in rows, with the ranks and places always so arranged that each one sits among his peers; and the steward of England is bound to attend to this, unless the king appoint another person. At the king's right foot shall sit the chancellor of England and the chief justice of England, and his associates, and their clerks who are of Parliament, and at his left foot shall sit the treasurer, chamberlain, barons of the Exchequer, justices of the bench, and their clerks who are of Parliament. . . .

Concerning the King's Aid

The king is not accustomed to ask aid from his kingdom except for approaching war, or making his sons knights, or marrying his daughters, and then such aids ought to be asked in full Parliament, and delivered in writing to each rank of peers of the Parliament, and answered in writing. . . .

Concerning the Breaking Up of the Parliament

The Parliament ought not to disband as long as any petition remains which has not been discussed, or at least to which the answer is not determined on, and if the king permits the contrary he is perjured. And no single one of the peers of the Parliament can or ought to retire without having obtained the permission of the king and all his peers, and this in full Parliament, and a record of this permission shall be entered in the roll of the Parliament. And if any one of the peers is sick during the Parliament, so that he cannot attend, then for three days he shall send excusers to the Parliament. And if he does not come

on the third day, two of his peers shall be sent to see and testify to his sickness, . . . and if it be found that he has feigned illness he shall be amerced as if for default, and if he has not feigned then he shall appoint some sufficient person before them to be present at the Parliament for him. . . .

The separation of the Parliament used to be in this manner: it ought first to be asked and publicly proclaimed in the Parliament, and within the palace of the Parliament, if there be anyone who shall have delivered a petition to the Parliament to which no answer has yet been given, or at least been answered as far as can be rightly done, and if no one shall answer, it is to be supposed that remedy has been afforded to everyone, and then, that is, when no one who at that time has exhibited his petition shall answer, [the king shall say,] "We will release our Parliament."

Questions: What political beliefs and sympathies underlie this description? What is the balance of power between Parliament and the king? Between the different groups that make up Parliament? What practical matters are dealt with here? What role does religion play?

70. A Chronicle of the Great Famine

In the early fourteenth century a terrible natural disaster overtook northern Europe when several years of inordinately rainy weather led to repeated massive crop failures and widespread famine. Marginal farmland had to be abandoned, animals could not be fed, many people starved, and a long period of population growth came to an end. In these brief extracts from the anonymous Life of Edward the Second*, the chronicler pauses in his account of wars and politics to comment on the catastrophe and its effects.*

Source: trans. N. Denholm-Young, *The Life of Edward the Second by the So-Called Monk of Malmesbury* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons., 1957), pp. 59, 64, 69–70, 90.

Then at the Purification of the Blessed Mary [2 February, 1315] the earls and all the barons met at London, . . . and [the meeting] dragged on almost to the end of Lent [in the middle of March].

In this Parliament, because merchants going about the country selling victuals charged excessively, the earls and barons, looking to the welfare of the state, appointed a remedy for this malady; they ordained a fixed price for oxen, pigs and sheep, for fowls, chickens, and pigeons, and for other common foods. . . . These matters were published throughout the land, and publicly proclaimed in shire

courts and boroughs. . . .

By certain portents the hand of God appears to be raised against us. For in the past year there was such plentiful rain that men could scarcely harvest the corn or bring it safely to the barn. In the present year worse has happened. For the floods of rain have rotted almost all the seed, so that the prophecy of Isaiah might seem now to be fulfilled; for he says that "ten acres of vineyard shall yield one little measure and thirty bushels of seed shall yield three bushels" (Isaiah 5:10), and in many places the hay lay so long underwater that it could neither be mown nor gathered. Sheep generally died and other animals were killed in a sudden plague. It is greatly to be feared that if the Lord finds us incorrigible after these visitations, he will destroy at once both men and beasts; and I firmly believe that unless the English Church had interceded for us, we should have perished long ago. . . .

After the feast of Easter [in 1316] the dearth of corn was much increased. Such a scarcity has not been seen in our time in England, nor heard of for a hundred years. For the measure of wheat sold in London and the neighboring places for 40d., and in other less thickly populated parts of the country 30d. was a common price. Indeed, during this time of scarcity a great famine appeared, and after the famine came a severe pestilence, of which many thousands died in many places. I have even heard it said by some, that in Northumbria dogs and horses and other unclean things were eaten. For there, on account of the frequent raids of the Scots, work is more irksome, as the accursed Scots despoil the people daily of their food. Alas, poor England! You who once helped other lands from your abundance, now poor and needy are forced to beg. Fruitful land is turned into a salt marsh; the inclemency of the weather destroys the fatness of the land; corn is sown and tares are brought forth. All this comes from the wickedness of the inhabitants. Spare, O Lord, spare thy people! For we are a scorn and a derision to them around us. Yet those who are learned in astrology say that these storms in the heavens have happened naturally; for Saturn, cold and heedless, brings rough weather that is useless to the seed; in the ascendant now for three years he has completed his course, and mild Jupiter duly succeeds him. Under Jupiter these floods of rain will cease, the valleys will grow rich in corn, and the fields will be filled with abundance. For the Lord shall give that which is good and our land shall yield her increase. . . .

[In 1318] the dearth that had so long plagued us ceased, and England became fruitful with a manifold abundance of good things. A measure of wheat, which the year before was sold for 40d., was now

freely offered to the buyer for 6d. . . .

Questions: What explanations for the disaster are offered? What were the effects of the poor weather? What attempts were made to limit the damage? After weather conditions returned to normal in 1318, might there have been any long-term effects for individuals and for society?

71. The Royal Response to the Famine

As indicated in the previous piece, price controls were the royal government's response to the inflation caused by the scarcity of food.

Source: trans. C.W. Colby, *Selections from the Sources of English History* (New York: Longmans, Green & Company, 1913), pp. 92–93.

Edward [II], by the grace of God, king of England, lord of Ireland, and duke of Aquitaine, to the mayor and sheriffs of London, greeting. We have received a complaint of the archbishops, bishops, earls, barons, and others of the commonalty of our kingdom, presented before us and our council, that there is now a great and intolerable dearth of oxen, cows, sheep, hogs, geese, hens, capons, chickens, pigeons, and eggs, to the great damage and grievance of them and all others living within the said kingdom. For this reason, they have urgently beseeched us to provide a fit remedy for this situation. We therefore, for the common benefit of the people of the said kingdom, assenting to the aforesaid supplication, as seemed meet, have ordained, by the advice and assent of the prelates, earls, barons, and others, being of our council, in our last Parliament held at Westminster, that a good saleable fat live ox, not fed with grain, be henceforth sold for 16s. and no more; and if he have been fed with corn, and be fat, then he may be sold for 24s. at the most; and a good fat live cow for 12s. A fat hog of two years of age for 40d. A fat sheep with the wool for 20d. A fat sheep shorn for 14d. A fat goose in our city aforesaid for 3d. A good and fat capon for 2½d., . . . and three pigeons for 1d., and twenty eggs for 1d. And that if any person or persons are found unwilling to sell the said goods at the settled prices, then let the goods be forfeited to us. And since we will that the foresaid ordinance be henceforth firmly and inviolably kept in our said city and its suburbs, we strictly order and command you to have the foresaid ordinance proclaimed publicly and distinctly in our foresaid city and its suburbs, where you think fit, and to be henceforth inviolably kept, in all and each of its articles, throughout your whole

liberty, under penalty of the foresaid forfeiture. By no means fail to do this if you wish to avoid our indignation and save yourselves from harm. Witness ourself at Westminster, the fourteenth day of March, in the eighth year of our reign.

Questions: What are the king's reasons for making this proclamation? What specific effects of the poor weather are cited? What provisions are made for the enforcement of the order? How severe are the proposed penalties?

72. Manor Court Rolls

On every manor in England, the manor court enforced the lord's rights over his tenants, dealt with disputes between residents, and tried minor criminal cases; thus the records kept of these sessions during the late Middle Ages provide a window onto medieval rural societies and economies. The extracts below come from Great Cressingham in Norfolk, in the years 1328–29.

Source: trans. H.P. Chandler, *Five Court Rolls of Great Cressingham, in the County of Norfolk* (privately printed, 1885), repr. in *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, Series 1, vol. 3, ed. E.P. Cheyney (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Department of History, n.d.) no. 5, pp. 20-24; revised.

A Court in [Great Cressingham], on [12 September, the] Monday next after the feast of the nativity of the Blessed Mary in the year of the reign of King Edward above mentioned [1328].

Excuse. William of Glosbridge, attorney of Sir Robert de Aspale by the common excuse through W. Prat. [He came afterward.]

Order. It was ordered, as before, to distrain [seize some of his property in order to compel] Master Firmin to show by what right, etc., concerning the tenement Walwayn. Likewise to distrain Sir John Walwayn for fealty.

Amercement [a monetary penalty], 3d. From Petronilla of Mintling for leave to agree with William Attewent, concerning a plea of trespass.

Order. It was ordered to distrain Peter the Cooper for 15d. which he owed to Roger the Miller, at the suit of William Attestreet, who proved against him 4s. in court.

Fine [payment to settle a dispute], 12d. From Walter Orengil for his term of four years to hold 6 acres of land rented from Gilbert

Cloveleek, for which grant the said Walter is to pay annually, at the feast of All Saints [1 November], to the said Gilbert four quarters and four bushels of barley, during the said term. Pledges Nally and John Buteneleyn.

Amercement, 2d. From John Brichtmer because he was summoned to do one boon-work [work owed to the lord by an unfree peasant] in autumn and did not come. Therefore he is to be amerced.

Amercement, 2d. From Alice, wife of Richard of Glosbridge, for the same.

Amercement, 2d. From William Robin for the same.

Order. From Walter Page and Margaret his wife, because they cannot deny that they are keeping back from John of Enston 3d., and therefore it was ordered that the said 3d. should be levied from the said Walter to the use of the said John. (Reversed, because he is poor.)

Fine, 4d. Martin the son of Basil and Alice his wife having been examined by the bailiff, surrendered into the lord's hand one rood of land with a cottage upon it, to the use of Isabel daughter of John Fayrsay and their heirs, to hold in villeinage at the will of the lord, doing etc., all rights being saved [not making any change in basic status and obligations]. And she gives, etc.

Fine, 4d. Isabel Fayrsay surrendered into the lord's hands one rood and one quarter of a rood of land and one rood of meadow and half of a cottage to the use of Martin Basil's son and Alice his wife and their heirs, to hold in villeinage at the will of the lord, doing etc. All rights being saved. And he gives to the lord [etc.].

Fine, 4d. From John Pye for his term of five years to hold in three roods of land rented from Hugh Holer. The term begins at the feast of Saint Michael [29 September].

Fine, £4. It is to be remembered that the lord out of his seisin delivered and gave to Vincent of Lakenham one messuage [a dwelling], 7 acres, and 2½ roods of land of the villeinage of the lord, which had been taken into the lord's hand after the death of William the son of Hugh because the aforesaid William was a bastard son and died without heirs, to hold of him to the aforesaid Vincent and his heirs, in villeinage at the will of the lord, doing the services and customs due for it. All rights being saved. And he gives to the lord for his entry. And saving to Alice who was the wife of Hugh the son of Lawrence half of the said tenements to hold in dower for the term of her life.

Note, 1 beast; price 10s. The jury says John Bassisson has died seized of one messuage, 16 acres and 1 rood of land in villeinage, and that John his son is his next heir, and is nine years of age. And because the said heir has not come, therefore it is ordered that seisin

be in the whole villeinage until, etc.

Order. To distrain the tenants of the tenement Sowle for one boon-work withheld in autumn.

Fine, 40s. All the jury says that Thomas Ode has died seised of a cottage and 5 acres and one rood of land of the villeinage of the lord, and that they know him to have no surviving heir, and therefore the whole tenement was taken into the lord's hand. And the lord out of his seisin delivered and gave the whole of the said tenement to a certain Simon Maning of Walton and his heirs to hold in villeinage at the will of the lord, doing the service and customs due for it. Saving all kinds of rights. And he gives to the lord to have entry.

Order. Ordered to distrain Henry Cook, John Maggard, chaplain, and John Ingel, because they withhold from the lord 3d. rent now for five years for the parcel tenement Merchant.

Likewise to distrain Richard of the River for fealty for the tenement formerly of Reyner Attechurch.

Election. The whole homage elect the tenement of Geoffrey Attechurchgate for the office of reeve this year, and the tenants are Nally, Buteneleyn, Martin, Bassisson, and others. . . .

Amercement, 12d. From William Hubbard for damage in the lord's meadows.

Amercement, 6d. From John Aylmer for damage in the fields in autumn.

Amercement, 2d. From Hugh Holer because he did not do his boon-work in autumn, as he was summoned to do.

12d. From Isabel Syapping for license to have a fold of her own sheep.

Memorandum. Of 4 bushels of barley taken from Roger the miller, etc., by the Reaper; and let them be handed over to Thomas Pawe for a debt recovered against the said Roger.

Total £6 4s. 11d., besides a heriot [death tax] valued at 10s.

Total of all the courts for the whole year, £8 16s. 8d.

Cressingham. A court and leet [a manorial court] there on [3 July 1329, the] Monday next after the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul, in the third year of the reign of King Edward, the third from the Conquest. . . .

Fine, 18d. Gilbert de Sedgeford surrendered into the hands of the bailiff, in the presence of the whole homage, a cottage to the use of John Putneys and his heirs, to hold in villeinage at the will of the lord, doing the services and customs due for it; saving rights of all kinds. And he gives for entry, etc.

Order. It was ordered to retain in the lord's hand one messuage and one acre of land of which John Belesson was seized when he died, because it is not known of what condition he was; and therefore the rolls of the 34th and 32nd [years] of King Edward [II] are being examined.

Amercement, 3d. From Alice, daughter of Geoffrey Attenewhouse, for marrying without leave.

Amercement, 4d. From John, son of Martin, for the same.

Postponement. A suit between Thomas Attetunsend, plaintiff, and Adam Attewater, defendant, concerning a plea of agreement, was postponed till the next court by consent of the parties on account of arbitration.

Postponement. A distraint taken from John Maggard and Henry Cook for arrears of rent was postponed till the next court. And it was ordered to distrain John Ingel, their joint-tenant, etc.

Chief Pledges: John Buteneleyn, John Hardy, William Robin, Thomas Hardy, Henry Pawe, Nicholas, son of Roger, Laurence Smith, Roger Attehallgate, Roger Gumay, William le Warde, William Attestreet, Robert Gemming. These were sworn and say:

Fine, 3d. From William Hubbard for license to put his grain, growing in the lord's villeinage, out of villeinage.

Amercement. From Silvester Smith, for blood drawn from John Marschal. [Erased.] Because he was elsewhere.

Amercement, 6d. From John Barun for the same from William, son of Sabina.

Amercement, 3d. From Margaret Millote for the same from Agnes, daughter of Martin Skinner.

Amercement, 6d. From the rector for an encroachment on the common at Greenholm, 12 perches long and 2 feet wide.

Amercement, 6d. From the same rector for an encroachment made at Caldwell, 20 perches long and 11 feet wide.

Amercement, 3d. From Roger of Drayton because he made an encroachment at the Strete 3 perches [49½ feet] long and 1 foot wide. . . .

Amercement, 6d. From Hugh Reff and Hugh Holer for license to resign the office of ale-taster.

Election. Alan Cook and Alan Spicer were elected to the office of ale-taster, and sworn.

Amercement, 2d. From Christiana Punt because she has sold ale and bread contrary to the assize.

Amercement, 2d. From William, son of Clarissa, because he broke into the house of John son of Geoffrey Brichtmer.

Amercement, 2d. From Adam son of Matilda Thomas because he is not in the tithing.

Amercement, 2d. From John son of Thomas Brun for the same.

Amercement, 6d. From Peter Miller for a hue and cry justly raised against him by the wife of William Fuller.

Questions: What different ranks of people and their occupations appear in the record? How do women figure in these proceedings? What laws and legal obligations are mentioned? What kinds of disputes are brought to the court?

73. A Proof of Age Inquest

Beginning in the late twelfth century, heirs to lands held directly from the king could not inherit until they proved they had reached the age of majority: twenty-one for men, fourteen for women. In the absence of standardized birth records, an heir's age was determined through an inquest overseen by a royal official called an escheator, who heard testimony by kin, servants, and neighbors who claimed to remember the birth of the young man or woman. Such testimonies are rich sources for everyday life, and demonstrate the continued value of oral traditions in a society moving toward a greater emphasis on written records.

Source: trans. J.E.E.S. Sharp, *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem and Other Analogous Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office*, Vol. 7: Edward III (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1909), pp. 139–41; revised.

Richard Henriz, son and heir of Richard Henriz, deceased, who held of King Edward II, [as a tenant] in chief. Writ to the escheator to take the proof of age of the said Richard, whose lands are in the wardship of John de Mounteney by the said king's commission . . . November, 2 Edward III [1329, the second year of Edward's reign].

Proof of age inquest held Thursday next before Christmas, 2 Edward III, at Derby.

John de Brokestouwe, aged 50 years and more, says that on the morrow of Saint Leonard, 1 Edward II [1307, the first year of Edward II's reign], the said Richard was born at Stapelford, Derbyshire, in the manor-house of the said town, in the large stone chamber by the hall, and was baptized in the church of St. Helen's there, and that Sir Richard, then prior of Newstead in Sherwood, and William de

Cobbeleye, then chaplain of the parish, lifted him from the sacred font. On the morrow of Saint Leonard last, the aforesaid Richard was 21 years of age, and this he knows because King Edward II was crowned at Westminster on Sunday next after the Purification next before the aforesaid feast of Saint Leonard.

Geoffrey de Brinsley, aged 48 years, says the same, and knows it because, on Sunday next after the Purification, 1 Edward II, before the said feast of Saint Leonard, the same king married Isabella, queen of England, at Westminster, and the witness passed the night before the celebration of the said nuptials at the Tower of London.

Roger de Manchester, aged 50 years and more, says the like, and knows it because on Saturday next after the feast of Saint Mark in the same year, Roger Hare slew Robert Daubeney in Stapelford, and on Saturday next before the feast of Saint Mark last 21 years will have elapsed.

John de Burton, aged 42 years, says the same, and knows it because on Wednesday the next before Saint Nicholas, 1 Edward II, he left the school of Nottingham by the advice of Thomas de Stapelford, rector of the church of Trowell, and became clerk with the said Thomas from the aforesaid day to the same day 7 years later, on which day he married Joan, daughter of Nicholas de Sandiacre, with whom he has now lived for 14 years.

John de Strelley, aged 60 years, agrees, and knows it because at that time he was bailiff for Robert de Strelley, knight, of the manor of Shipley, Derbyshire, and on Thursday next before the feast of Saint Edmund, king and martyr, 1 Edward II, there came robbers by night to the said manor, and made assault, and while he was defending the manor one of the robbers struck him through the middle of the arm with an arrow.

Hugh Abbot, aged 50 years, agrees, and knows it because on Sunday next after the feast of Saint Leonard, 1 Edward II, he had a son, Robert, born and baptized and dead on the same day, 21 years ago.

William Torcard, aged 60 years, agrees with the said Hugh, and knows it because his mother Margery died on Saint Swithun's day in the year following, and on the same feast it will be 22 years ago.

William Esthwaite, aged 40 years, agrees with the same William Torcard, and knows it because on the day after the feast of Saint Andrew, 1 Edward II, his daughter Alice was espoused to Robert de Bilburgh, and at the feast of Saint Andrew last 21 years had elapsed since then.

Geoffrey, son of Richard, aged 50 years, agrees with the said

William Esthwaite, and knows it because on the day on which the said Richard Henriz was born, namely on the morrow of Saint Leonard, 1 Edward II, the said Geoffrey had a son named Richard, who celebrated his first mass in the parish church of Stapelford on the same day.

John Gerveys, of Chilwell, aged 40 years, agrees with Geoffrey, son of Richard, and knows it because on the third day after the birth of the said Richard, viz., on the fourth day after the feast of Saint Leonard, 1 Edward II, his wife Cecily was engaged for the nourishment of the aforesaid Richard, and stayed three days as his wet-nurse. But the stay did not please her, for on the fourth day she withdrew from her service and returned home to her husband.

Robert, son of Thomas of Bramcote, aged 52 years, agrees with the said John, and knows it because on the Sunday before Saint Leonard, 1 Edward II, his firstborn son Roger was born, and on Sunday before the said feast last past the said Roger was 21 years of age.

Stephen Paule, aged 43 years, agrees with the said Robert, and knows it because on the morrow of Saint Leonard, 1 Edward II, he received the office of bailiff of the honor of Peverell, by the demise of Richard Martel, and by the date of his commission he has knowledge of the age of the said Richard.

John de Mounteney, being warned to be present at the taking of this proof, did not appear, nor did any one on his behalf, to show cause why the said lands and tenements should not be restored to the aforesaid Richard Henriz, as of full age.

Questions: How were witnesses able to recall dates over two decades in the past? What role did written records play in the inquest? What do we learn about how medieval people situated themselves in time?

74. London Craft Guild Ordinances

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, urban practitioners of each craft or industry banded together in craft guilds that regulated their businesses, set quality standards and prices, and determined who was eligible to work in the craft.

Source: trans. H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth, and XVth Centuries* (London: Longmans, Green, & Company, 1868), pp. 226–28, 372–73; revised.

Articles of the Spurriers, 1345

In the first place, that no one of the trade of spurriers shall work

longer than from the beginning of the day until curfew is rung out at the church of St. Sepulcher [at nine or ten at night], outside Newgate, by reason that no man can work so neatly by night as by day. And many persons of the said trade, who know how to practice deception in their work, desire to work by night rather than by day: and then they introduce false iron, and iron that has been cracked, for tin, and also, they put gilt on false copper, and cracked. And further, many of the said trade are wandering about all day, without working at all at their trade; and then, when they have become drunk and frantic, they take to their work, to the annoyance of the sick and of all their neighborhood, as well by reason of the fights that arise between them and the strange folk who are dwelling among them. And then they blow up their fires so vigorously, that their forges begin all at once to blaze, to the great peril of themselves and of all the neighborhood around. And then too, all the neighbors are much in dread of the sparks, which so vigorously issue forth in all directions from the mouths of the chimneys in their forges. By reason whereof, it seems unto them that working by night [should be ended,] in order to avoid such false work and such perils. . . . And if any person shall be found in the said trade to do to the contrary, let him be amerced, the first time for 40d., one half thereof to go to the use of the chamber of the guildhall of London, and the other half to the use of the said trade; the second time, in half a mark, and the third time, for 10s., to the use of the same chamber and trade; and the fourth time, let him forswear the trade forever.

Also, that no one of the said trade shall keep a house or shop to carry on his business, unless he is free of the city; and that no one shall cause to be sold, or exposed for sale, any manner of old spurs for new ones; or shall garnish them, or change them for new ones.

Also, that no one of the said trade shall take an apprentice for a term of less than seven years; and such apprentice shall be enrolled, according to the usages of the said city. . . .

Also, that no one of the said trade shall receive the apprentice, serving-man, or journeyman of another in the same trade, during the term agreed between his master and him, on the pain aforesaid.

Also, that no alien of another country, or foreigner of this country, shall follow or use the said trade, unless he is enfranchised before the mayor, aldermen, and chamberlain; and that, by witness and surety of the good folks of the said trade, who will undertake for him as to his loyalty and his good behavior.

Also, that no one of the said trade shall work on Saturdays, after Nones has been rung out in the city; and not from that hour until the Monday morning following.

Ordinances of the Court-Hand Writers, or Scriveners, 1373

Unto the honorable lords, the mayor and aldermen of the city of London, the writers of court-hand of the same city pray that, whereas their craft is very much in demand in the city, and as it is especially necessary that it should be ruled and followed lawfully and wisely and by persons instructed therein, and seeing that, for lack of good rule, many mischiefs and defaults are, and have often been committed in the said craft, by those who hailing from various countries, both chaplains and others, have no knowledge of the customs, franchises, and usages of the city, and who cause themselves to be called "scriveners," and undertake to make wills, deeds, and all other things touching the said craft; the fact being that they are foreigners and unknown, and also are less skilled than the aforesaid scriveners who are free of the said city, and who for long have been versed in their craft, and have largely given of their means for their instruction and freedom therein: to the great damage and disinheritance of many persons, as well of the said city as of many countries of the realm, and to the great damage and scandal of all the good and lawful men of the said craft—therefore the good scriveners pray that it may please your honorable and discreet lordships, to grant to them, and to establish for the common profit of the said city, and of many other countries, and for the well-being and amendment of their condition, that they, and their successors for all time, may be ruled and may enjoy their franchise in their degree in manner as other folks of diverse trades of the said city are ruled and do enjoy their franchise, in their degree; according to the following points.

In the first place, they pray that no person shall be suffered to keep shop of the said craft in the city, or in the suburb thereof, if he be not free of the city, made free in the same craft, and that, by men of the craft.

Also, that no one shall be admitted to such freedom, if he be not first examined and found able by those of the same craft who shall, for the time being, by you and your successors be assigned and deputed to do the same, and to be wardens of the said craft.

Also, that every scrivener of the said city, and of its suburbs, shall put his name to the deeds which he makes, so that it may be known who has made the same.

Also, that every one who shall act against this ordinance and enactment, shall pay to the chamber the first time 40d.; the second time, half a mark; and the third time, 10s.

Also, that these articles shall be enrolled in the said chamber, as being firm and established forever.

Questions: What do we learn about the London economy and the functions of craft guilds? How did the crafts present themselves? In what ways did the guilds both support and restrict their members?

75. Urban Environmental Problems and Regulations

Crowded conditions and industrial processes led to serious environmental problems in medieval English towns like London. The concentration of human and industrial wastes caused particular problems for both inhabitants and authorities, who had to balance economic, safety, and quality-of-life concerns through legislation, litigation, and other means.

Source: trans. H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth, and XVth Centuries* (London: Longmans, Green, & Company, 1868), pp. 171–72, 225–26, 295–96, 339–40; revised.

Unlawful Nets Condemned to Be Burned, 1329

. . . [On 19 April], in the third year of the reign of King Edward III, there came Estmar Coker and John Wychard, citizens of London, together with Ralph Bourghard, serjeant of the chamber of guildhall, and brought before the mayor and aldermen at the guildhall, John Jacob of Rith [and seven other] fishermen, because they had been found fishing in the water of Thames with twelve nets which are known as "tromkeresnet," and are a kind of kidel: the meshes of which nets—which are called mascles—ought to be one inch and a half in size, whereas these were hardly half an inch; and with which nets the said fishermen caught every fish, and even every little fish that entered such nets. Thus the small fish, which are called fry, were unable to escape from the said nets, to the great damage of all the people of the city, and also, of others resorting to the same city.

And the said John Jacob and others, being questioned as to this, did not deny it, nor could they deny that they had done as before stated. . . . It was therefore ordered by the mayor and aldermen that the said nets should be burned at the cross in Cheap, and the said fishermen committed to prison, until they should have paid a fine. . . . And they were accordingly delivered to the sheriff . . . and taken to Newgate.

Afterward, on [19 May], they were brought to the guildhall, before

the mayor and aldermen, and by special favor and for charity's sake, seeing that they were but poor men, the fines were remitted to them for the present, on the understanding that they should behave themselves well for the future, and no longer presume to fish with such nets.

Ordinance That Brewers Shall Not Waste the Water of the Conduit in Cheap, 1345

At a husting of pleas of land, held on [20 July] in the nineteenth year of the reign of King Edward III . . . it was shown by William de Iford, the common serjeant, on behalf of the commonalty, that whereas of old a certain conduit was built in the midst of the city of London, that so the rich and middling persons living there might have water for preparing their food, and the poor have water to drink, the aforesaid water was now so wasted by brewers, and persons keeping brewhouses, and making malt, that in these modern times it will no longer suffice for the rich and middling, or for the poor, to the common loss of the whole community.

And in order to avoid such common loss, it was agreed by the mayor and aldermen, with the assent of the commonalty, that such brewers, or keepers of brewhouses, or makers of malt, shall in future no longer presume to brew or make malt with the water of the conduit. And if anyone shall hereafter presume to make ale with the water of the conduit, or to make malt with the same, he is to lose the tankard or tyne with which he shall have carried the water from the conduit, as well as pay 40d., the first time, for the use of the commonalty; he shall lose the tankard or tyne, and pay half a mark, the second time; and the third time, he is to lose the tankard or tyne, and pay 10s., and further, he is to be committed to prison, to remain there at the discretion of the mayor and aldermen.

It was also agreed at the same husting, that the fishmongers at the stocks, who wash their fish [with that water], shall incur the same penalty.

Royal Order for Cleaning the Streets of the City, and the Banks of the Thames, 1357

The king to the mayor and sheriffs of our city of London, greeting. Considering how the streets, and lanes, and other places in the aforesaid city and its suburbs, in the times of our forefathers and our own, were accustomed to be cleansed from dung, refuse heaps, and other filth, and . . . to be protected from the corruption arising from this waste, from which practice much honor accrued to the said city

and its residents; and whereas now, when passing along the water of the Thames, we have beheld dung, and refuse heaps, and other filth accumulated in various places in the said city, upon the bank of the river, and have also perceived the fumes and other abominable stenches arising from these; from the corruption of which, if tolerated, great peril, both to the persons dwelling within the said city and to the nobles and others passing along the said river, will, it is feared, ensue, unless indeed some fitting remedy be speedily provided for the same. . . .

We, wishing to take due precaution against such perils, and to preserve the honor and decency of the same city, in so far as we may, command you to cause both the banks of the said river, and the streets and lanes of the same city, and the suburbs thereof, to be cleansed of dung, refuse heaps, and other filth, without delay, and to keep them clean afterward; further, we command that a public proclamation be made in the aforesaid city and its suburbs, and it to be strictly forbidden on our behalf, that anyone shall, on pain of heavy forfeiture to us, place or cause to be placed dung or other filth . . . in the same. And if you find any persons doing to the contrary, after the proclamation and prohibition are so made, then you are to cause them so to be chastised and punished, that such penalty and chastisement may cause fear and dread unto others and deter them from perpetrating the like. . . .

Royal Order for the Removal of Butchers' Bridge and the Prevention of the Slaughtering of Beasts at St. Nicholas Shambles, 1369

Edward, by the grace of God etc., to the mayor, recorder, aldermen, and sheriffs of London, greeting. Whereas of late, upon the grievous complaint of various prelates, nobles, and other persons of the aforesaid city, who have houses and buildings in the streets, lanes, and other places, between the Shambles of the butchers of St. Nicholas, near to the mansion of the friars minor of London, and the banks of the Thames near Baynard's Castle, in the same city, shown by their petition before us and our council in our last Parliament, held at Westminster, we had heard that by reason of the slaughtering of beasts in the said shambles, and the carrying of the entrails and offal of the said beasts through the aforesaid streets, lanes, and places to the said banks of the river, at the place called "Butchers' Bridge," where the same entrails and offal are thrown into the water, and the dropping of the blood of such beasts between the said shambles and the waterside, the same running along the middle of the said streets and lanes, grievous corruption and filth have been generated, both in

the water and in the aforesaid streets, lanes, and places, and adjacent parts in the said city; so that no one, by reason of such corruption and filth, could hardly venture to abide in his house there: and we . . . had determined, with the assent of all our Parliament, that the said bridge should be pulled down and wholly removed, before [1 August] last past, . . . and did accordingly give you our commands, that . . . you would cause some more fitting place to be ordained outside the said city, where such slaughtering might be done with the least possible nuisance and grievance of the city, . . . but you have not hitherto cared to do anything, in manifest contempt of ourselves, . . . and to the no small damage and grievance of the same prelates, nobles, and people of the city aforesaid, by which we are greatly moved—

We do therefore again command you, as distinctly as we may, and do enjoin, that you will cause some certain place outside the said city to be ordained, where the slaughtering of such beasts, to the least nuisance and grievance of the commonalty of the city aforesaid, may be done, by [15 August] next ensuing, and the bridge aforesaid in the meantime to be pulled down and wholly removed; or else you will explain to us why you have not obeyed our command aforesaid. . . . And this, on pain of paying £100, you must in no manner fail to do. . . .

Questions: What environmental problems and concerns did fourteenth-century Londoners have? How did they respond to these problems? Who had the authority to order changes, and on what grounds? What attitudes and assumptions about the urban environment underlie their actions?

76. Articles of Accusation against Edward II

Edward II (r. 1307–27) alienated many of his barons by his expensive military failures in Scotland, his deference to royal favorites, and his vindictiveness toward magnates who sought to restrain him. A rebellion led by Edward's estranged wife Isabella of France and marcher lord Roger Mortimer succeeded in capturing and imprisoning the king, and in January 1327 Parliament convened at Westminster to approve an unprecedented proposal for Edward's deposition. After approving the king's deposition, parliamentary representatives offered Edward II the choice of abdication in favor of his son Edward or forcible deposition in favor of a new king selected by his enemies; he chose the former option. Thirteen-year-old Edward III was hastily crowned, and by September Edward II

had died (probably murdered) in prison. The following articles show how Edward II's enemies condemned his shortcomings as king and justified his removal to an initially divided Parliament.

Source: trans. G. Burton Adams and H. Morse Stephens, *Select Documents of English Constitutional History* (New York: Macmillan, 1901), p. 99; revised.

It has been decided that Prince Edward, the eldest son of the king, shall have the government of the realm and shall be crowned king, for the following reasons:

1. First, because the king is incompetent to govern in person. For throughout his reign he has been controlled and governed by others who have given him evil counsel, to his own dishonor and to the destruction of holy Church and of all his people, without his being willing to see or understand what is good or evil or to make amendment, or his being willing to do as was required by the great and wise men of his realm, or to allow amendment to be made.
2. Item, throughout his reign he has not been willing to listen to good counsel nor to adopt it, nor to give himself to the good government of his realm, but he has always given himself up to unseemly works and occupations, neglecting to satisfy the needs of his realm.
3. Item, through the lack of good government he has lost the realm of Scotland and other territories and lordships in Gascony and Ireland which his father left him in peace, and he has lost the friendship of the king of France and of many other great men.
4. Item, by his pride and obstinacy and by evil counsel he has destroyed holy Church and imprisoned some of the persons of holy Church, and brought distress upon others, and he has also put to a shameful death, imprisoned, exiled, and disinherited many great and noble men.
5. Item, wherein he was bound by his oath to do justice to all, he has not willed to do it, for his own profit and his greed and that of the evil councilors who had been about him, nor has he kept the other points of his oath which he made at his coronation, as he was bound to do.
6. Item, he has abandoned his realm, and left it without a ruler, by going out of the realm with notorious enemies, and doing all that he could to ruin his realm and his people, and what is

worse, by his cruelty and lack of character, he has shown himself incorrigible without hope of amendment, which things are so notorious that they cannot be denied.

Questions: What are the main charges against Edward? How do these compare with those made against his grandfather (doc. 56)? Judging from this denunciation, how did Edward II's contemporaries expect a capable king to rule? Why did the magnates and prelates wish to have Edward's deposition approved by Parliament?

77. Dispute between an Englishman and a Frenchman

After the loss of Normandy in 1204, most English elites gradually lost the familial and territorial ties that had bound them to the continent; a century and a half later, many had come to regard the French as foreigners and to define their own Englishness in part as a rejection of and assertion of superiority to the French. The Hundred Years' War (1337–1453) encouraged nationalistic sentiment among all social classes. This anonymous work from the 1340s is an excellent example of the anti-French propaganda intended to encourage English support for the war in its early stages.

Source: trans. T.B. James and J. Simons, *The Poems of Laurence Minot, 1333–1352* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1989), pp. 97–99.

The Frenchman Speaks

You reproach me with well-dressed hair, pale cheeks, soft speech, and a controlled, civilized gait. If a sense of order controls the hair and insists that it be neatly dressed, a shambling step would be an abandonment of principles. If my face is pale, it is Pallas [Athena, the goddess of wisdom] who spreads the pallor over my features; this complexion does not come from Venus [goddess of love and sex]. If I utter soft sounds, it is because what was at first a harsh sound to the ears makes the words acceptable when softened in the mouth. If I walk with delicate steps, this is because my outward restraint also controls my inner self. . . .

You also charge us with meanness because we show restraint and refuse to be slaves to our gullets and nothing else. What creatures does England rear except cattle? Their bellies are their god and it is to the belly that they [Englishmen] gladly offer sacrifice. The wasteful glutton fills his gullet and stretches his stomach. He swells up and is

more beast than man. To provide him with drink the very ponds are planted with crops: from the union of these two different elements nothing is produced. We drink the liquor of the vine: only the lees [dregs from the bottoms of wine barrels] are sold to England. . . .

The Englishman Speaks

I should like to know why the Frenchman presses me to fight and what effrontery prompts you to speak, Frenchman? What menaces lower from your brow? What threats rumble in your chest? What are your lips up to with their smooth utterance? Leave the men alone, let woman strive with woman: a man's struggle with a woman is unequal. Whatever posture you take, wherever you go, there is always some element to bring you reproach. Should you look at her head while she preens herself with her neat hair, she involves all the other men on some pretext or another. If she turns her head now to one side, now to the other, you will run off thinking she does not fancy you. If the vice of Venus robs your face of its color, your fault is loudly proclaimed by your paleness. If your tongue softens its force so that your palate does not sound too loud, then it is a woman talking through a man's lips. If your feet are swollen from walking, you hold them in the air, scarce touching the road with the forward foot. If you surrender other parts to be used like a woman, you act like a woman and pretend not to be a man. If it is because a Frenchwoman is a castrated effeminate Frenchman, then, Frenchman, take the name of French hen and the luck that goes with it.

Lest the only claim on Frenchmen is Venus and her ways, blind avarice has curved their grasping fingers. . . . Be convinced by the evidence of a poor man's table. Bacchus [the god of wine] saves some of the lees for the servants' table and the poor man's table is set with poor food. France harvests the chaff from the vine, England the grain [to make beer]. We drink off the liquor, the Frenchman keeps the rest. Since such French depravity stains the soul of the Frenchman, then, Frenchman, silence is best. Shut up!

Here ends a dispute between an Englishman and a Frenchman.

Questions: What stereotypes were associated with the English by the French, and with the French by the English? How might such a piece have encouraged English support for the war against France?

78. Jean Froissart on the Battle of Crécy

Under Edward III (r. 1327–77), England became involved in

the Hundred Years' War, a protracted but intermittent conflict with France, over a range of issues including English claims to lands in France, the succession to the French throne, and Flemish politics. In August 1346 the English army won its first major victory of the conflict when it defeated a significantly larger French force at Crécy in northern France. The story of the battle is told by the great French chronicler Froissart in his long chronicle of the war.

Source: trans. T. Johnes, *Froissart's Chronicles* (London, 1803); repr. in F.A. Ogg, *A Source Book of Mediaeval History: Documents Illustrative of European Life and Institutions from the German Invasions to the Renaissance* (New York: American Book Company, 1908), pp. 428–36; revised.

The king of England, as I have mentioned before, encamped this Friday in the plain [east of the village of Crécy], for he found the country abounding in provisions; but if they should have failed, he had an abundance in the carriages which attended him. The army set about cleaning and repairing their armor; and the king gave a supper that evening to the earls and barons of his army, where they made good cheer. On their taking leave, the king remained alone with the lord of his bedchamber. He retired into his oratory and, falling on his knees before the altar, prayed to God that if he should fight his enemies on the morrow he might come off with honor. About midnight he went to his bed and, rising early the next day, he and the prince of Wales [Edward, the Black Prince] heard mass and took communion. The greater part of his army did the same. . . .

After mass the king ordered his men to arm themselves and assemble on the ground he had chosen beforehand. He had enclosed a large park near a wood, at the rear of his army, in which he placed all his baggage-wagons and horses, and this park had but one entrance. His men-at-arms and archers remained on foot. The king afterward ordered, through his constable and his two marshals, that the army should be divided into three battalions. . . .

The king then mounted a small palfrey, having a white wand in his hand, and, attended by his two marshals on each side of him, he rode through all the ranks, encouraging and entreating the army to guard his honor. He spoke this so gently, and with such a cheerful countenance, that all who had been dejected were immediately comforted by seeing and hearing him.

When he had thus visited all the battalions, it was near ten o'clock. He retired to his own division and ordered them all to eat heartily afterward and drink a glass. They ate and drank at their ease; and, having packed up pots, barrels, etc., in the carts, they returned to their

battalions, according to the marshals' orders, and seated themselves on the ground, placing their helmets and bows before them, so that they might be the fresher when their enemies should arrive.

That same Saturday, the king of France [Philip VI] arose early and heard mass in the monastery of St. Peter's in Abbeville, where he was lodged. Having ordered his army to do the same, he left that town after sunrise. When he had marched about two leagues from Abbeville and was approaching the enemy, he was advised to form his army in order of battle, and to let those on foot march forward, so that they would not be trampled by the horses. The king then sent off four knights—the lord Moyne of Bastleberg, the lord of Noyers, the lord of Beaujeu, and the lord of Aubigny—who rode so near to the English that they could clearly distinguish their position. The English plainly perceived that they were come to reconnoiter. However, they took no notice of it, but allowed them to return unmolested. When the king of France saw them coming back, he halted his army, and the knights, pushing through the crowds, came near the king, who asked them, "My lords, what news?" They looked at each other, without opening their mouths, for no one chose to speak first. At last the king addressed the lord Moyne, who was attached to the king of Bohemia, and had performed very many gallant deeds, so that he was esteemed one of the most valiant knights in Christendom. The lord Moyne said, "Sir, I will speak, since it pleases you to order me, but with the assistance of my companions. We have advanced far enough to reconnoiter your enemies. Know, then, that they are drawn up in three battalions and are awaiting you. I would advise, for my part (submitting, however, to better counsel), that you halt your army here and quarter them for the night, for before the rear shall come up and the army be properly drawn out, it will be very late. Your men will be tired and in disorder, while they will find your enemies fresh and properly arrayed. On the morrow, you may draw up your army more at your ease and may reconnoiter at leisure to determine where will be most advantageous to begin the attack; for, be assured, they will wait for you."

The king commanded that it should be so done; and the two marshals rode, one toward the front, and the other to the rear, crying out, "Halt banners, in the name of God and Saint Denis." Those that were in the front halted, but those behind said they would not halt until they were as far forward as the front rank. When the front perceived the rear pushing on, they pushed forward; and neither the king nor the marshals could stop them, but they marched on without any order until they came in sight of their enemies. As soon as the foremost rank saw them, they fell back at once in great disorder,

which alarmed those in the rear, who thought the fighting had begun. There was then space and room enough for them to have passed forward, had they been willing to do so. Some did so, but others remained behind.

All the roads between Abbeville and Crécy were covered with common people, who, when they had come within three leagues of their enemies, drew their swords, crying out, “Kill, kill;” and with them were many great lords who were eager to display their courage. No man who was not present can imagine, or describe truly, the confusion of that day, especially the bad management and disorder of the French, whose troops were beyond number.

Upon seeing their enemies advance, the English, who were drawn up in three divisions and seated on the ground, arose boldly and fell into their ranks. That of the prince was the first to do so, whose archers were formed in the manner of a portcullis, or harrow, and the men-at-arms in the rear. The earls of Northampton and Arundel, who commanded the second division, had posted themselves in good order on his wing to assist and succor the prince if necessary.

You must know that these kings, dukes, earls, barons, and lords of France did not advance in any regular order, but one after the other, or in any way most pleasing to themselves. As soon as the king of France came in sight of the English his blood began to boil, and he cried out to his marshals, “Order the Genoese forward, and begin the battle, in the name of God and Saint Denis.”

There were about fifteen thousand Genoese crossbowmen; but they were quite fatigued, having marched on foot that day six leagues, completely armed, and with their crossbows. They told the constable that they were not in a fit condition to do any great things that day in battle. The earl of Alençon, hearing this, said, “This is what one gets for employing such scoundrels, who fail when there is any need for them.”

During this time a heavy rain fell, accompanied by thunder and a very terrible eclipse of the sun; and before this rain a great flight of crows hovered in the air over all those battalions, making a loud noise. Shortly afterward it cleared up and the sun shone very brightly, but the Frenchmen had the sun in their faces, and the English at their backs.

When the Genoese were somewhat in order they approached the English and set up a loud shout in order to frighten them, but the latter remained quite still and did not seem to hear it. They then set up a second shout and advanced forward a little, but the English did not move. They hooted a third time, advancing with their crossbows presented, and began to shoot. The English archers then advanced one

step forward and shot their arrows with such force and quickness that it seemed as if it snowed.

When the Genoese felt these arrows, which pierced their arms, heads, and through their armor, some of them cut the strings of their crossbows, others flung them on the ground, and all turned about and retreated, quite discomfited. The French had a large body of men-at-arms on horseback, richly dressed, to support the Genoese. The king of France, seeing them fall back, cried out, “Kill those scoundrels for me, for they stop up our road without any reason.” You would then have seen the above-mentioned men-at-arms lay about them, killing as many of these runaways as they could.

The English continued shooting as vigorously and quickly as before. Some of their arrows fell among the horsemen, who were sumptuously equipped, and, killing and wounding many, made them caper and fall among the Genoese, so that they were in such confusion they could never rally again. In the English army there were some Cornish and Welshmen on foot who had armed themselves with large knives. These, advancing through the ranks of the men-at-arms and archers, who made way for them, came upon the French when they were in this danger and, falling upon earls, barons, knights and squires, slew many, at which the king of England was afterward much exasperated.

The valiant king of Bohemia was slain there. He was called Charles of Luxemburg, for he was the son of the gallant king and emperor Henry of Luxemburg. Having heard the order of the battle, he inquired where his son, the lord Charles, was. His attendants answered that they did not know, but believed that he was fighting. The king said to them: “Sirs, you are all my people, my friends and brothers in arms this day; therefore, as I am blind, I ask you to lead me so far into the engagement that I may strike one stroke with my sword.” The knights replied that they would lead him forward immediately; and, in order that they might not lose him in the crowd, they fastened the reins of all their horses together, and put the king at their head, that he might gratify his wish, and advanced toward the enemy. The king rode in among the enemy, and made good use of his sword, for he and his companions fought most gallantly. They advanced so far that they were all slain; on the morrow they were found on the ground, with their horses still tied together.

Early in the day, some French, Germans, and Savoyards had broken through the archers of the prince’s battalion, and had engaged with the men-at-arms, upon which the second battalion came to his aid; they arrived in good time, for otherwise he would have been hard

pressed. The first division, seeing the danger they were in, sent a knight [Sir Thomas Norwich] in great haste to the king of England, who was posted upon a promontory, near a windmill. On the knight's arrival, he said, "Sir, the earl of Warwick, the lord Stafford, the lord Reginald Cobham, and the others who are with your son are being vigorously attacked by the French, and they entreat you to come to their assistance with your battalion for, if the number of the French should increase, they fear he will have too much to do."

The king replied, "Is my son dead, unhorsed, or so badly wounded that he cannot support himself?" "Nothing of the sort, thank God," rejoined the knight; "but he is in so hot an engagement that he has great need of your help." The king answered, "Now, Sir Thomas, return to those who sent you and tell them not to send for me again this day, or expect that I shall come, whatever may happen, as long as my son lives, and say that I command them to let the boy win his spurs. For I am determined that, if it pleases God, all the glory and honor of this day shall be given to him, and to those into whose care I have entrusted him." The knight returned to his lords and related the king's answer, which greatly encouraged them and made them regret that they had ever sent such a message.

Late after vespers, the king of France had not more than sixty men about him. Sir John of Hainault, who was of the number, had once remounted the king, for the latter's horse had been killed under him by an arrow. He said to the king, "Sir, retreat while you have an opportunity, and do not expose yourself so needlessly. If you have lost this battle, another time you will be the conqueror." After he had said this, he took the bridle of the king's horse and led him off by force; for he had before entreated him to retire.

The king rode on until he came to the castle of La Broyes, where he found the gates shut, for it was very dark. The king ordered the castle's governor to be summoned. He came upon the battlements and asked who it was that called at such an hour. The king answered, "Open, open, governor: it is the fortune of France." The governor, hearing the king's voice, immediately descended, opened the gate, and let down the drawbridge. The king and his company entered the castle; he had with him only five barons—Sir John Hainault, the lord Charles of Montmorency, the lord of Beaujeu, the lord of Aubigny, and the lord of Montfort. The king would not bury himself in such a place as that, but, having taken some refreshment, set out again with his attendants about midnight, and rode on, under the direction of guides who were well acquainted with the country, until, at about daybreak, he came to Amiens, where he halted.

This Saturday the English never quitted their ranks in pursuit of anyone, but remained on the field, guarding their positions and

defending themselves against all who attacked them. The battle was ended at the hour of vespers. . . .

They made great fires and lighted torches because of the darkness of the night. King Edward then came down from his post, who all that day had not put on his helmet, and, with his whole battalion, advanced to the prince of Wales, whom he embraced in his arms and kissed, and said, "Sweet son, God give you good preference. You are my son, for most loyally have you acquitted yourself this day. You are worthy to be a sovereign." The prince bowed down very low and humbled himself, giving all honor to the king his father.

The English, during the night, made frequent thanksgivings to the Lord for the happy outcome of the day, and without rioting; for the king had forbidden all riot or noise.

Questions: What chivalric values are evident in this text? What is the author's attitude toward the two sides? What factors influenced the battle's outcome?

79. Thomas Bradwardine's Victory Sermon after Crécy

Two months after their victory at Crécy, Edward III and his army were besieging the French port of Calais when news reached them of another great English military triumph over the Scots at Neville's Cross. To celebrate both victories, King Edward commissioned his chaplain, the theologian Thomas Bradwardine, to preach a sermon to the army. The result was a masterful piece of propaganda in support of English foreign policy.

Source: trans. K.A. Smith, from H.S. Offler, ed., "Thomas Bradwardine's 'Victory Sermon' in 1346," in *Church and Crown in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. A.I. Doyle (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2000), pp. 16–18, 25–27.

Thanks be to God, who always brings us victory (2 Corinthians 2:14). Dearest ones, our lord king has many fine clerics, as befits his royal majesty, but nevertheless it has pleased him, in his royal prudence, that I, least among them, preach a sermon to you. How truly just and proper it is that we give thanks to the lord our God, for he has made us first among the many peoples of the world and freely bestowed great favors upon us. But so that he will continue to do such things for us freely and gladly, we must collectively make ourselves worthy of more special favors yet to come, when he will bring out our graces and our pleasing works. Therefore, at the beginning of this present sermon, let us humbly say the "Our Father" and "Ave Maria" to show

our gratitude to God for the favors we have received.

Thanks be to God, who always brings us victory. Dearest ones, it is customary to give thanks in wartime. You have recently accomplished various great feats of arms in several places: in France, in Gascony, in Flanders and Brittany, and most recently in Ireland and England, as you know. Now recently in Ireland our most ferocious enemies—four kings, as is reported, of the sort they have there—were defeated, gave hostages, and submitted to the authority of the English king. And indeed in England, on 17 October of this last year, the king of Scotland invaded the northern regions of England with 60,000 soldiers, and was met by about 20,000 soldiers from those parts near Durham; in that very bitter battle [the Battle of Neville's Cross], the Scottish king was defeated and captured and, freed from prudent custody . . . [the manuscript is illegible here] the entire flower of the Scottish people perished. For almost all of Scotland's nobles were slain in this dishonorable defeat, and the survivors were captured and imprisoned. It behooves us, then, to give thanks for our victories in arms, according to the approved custom.

Indeed, dearest ones, behold a true prediction, one which can never be doubted: Whatever God wishes to be done, will be done; whoever God wishes to win, will win; and whoever God wishes to rule, will rule. . . . And likewise, if all *heaven and earth contained within the bounds of heaven* (Esther 3:10) favors you, but God opposes you, how can you prevail? Whence it is manifestly clear that those who sin and thus provoke divine wrath will never equal those who give thanks, as they ought, to the creator for their victories. . . .

In that last battle near Durham there were around 60,000 Scots, men renowned among nations for their strong bodies and ferocious spirits, who were well armed and trained for war—in brief, most noble warriors. Opposing them were around 20,000 Englishmen, as is commonly reported, and the battle resulted in a glorious English victory, as I have said above. At the Battle of Crécy, too, our adversaries greatly outnumbered us and their army was stronger in many respects.

Let me make even clearer, my dear listeners, what portion of the English army was present at Crécy at that battle. For truly, there are various divisions of the English army mustered for battle in nine different regions, since the army was long ago divided into nine divisions or orders, which correspond to the number of the angelic orders in heaven. Among those four divisions remaining in England, the first—following the order of heaven, and the procedure of celestial matters—is assigned to guard the eastern shore against the Danish threat, or against other enemies. Another division patrols the southern coast to protect it from enemies, that is, from demons from the south

and the many other dangers that constantly menace that seashore, as late events attest (for some enemies who came ashore at the ports guarded by that division of the army were at once driven back by its strong hand). The third division is stationed in the west, to repress the audacity of the Welsh, the craftiness of the Irish, the insolence of the Scots, and any other peoples dwelling in those parts or who might come there with wicked intent. The fourth division remains on the northern boundary on account of the raids the Scots inflict on those regions; for those people are like a *boiling cauldron from the face of the north* (Jeremiah 1:13) burning up England's borders, since from the north *an evil spreading over all the inhabitants* (Jeremiah 1:14) of that part of England is greatly to be feared. The fifth division of the army was stationed in Ireland to restrain that people; the sixth division was in Gascony; the illustrious seventh division in Britanny; the energetic eighth division in Flanders; and the ninth division with our lord king at Crécy.

What chance had this little division of the English against the gathered might of the French? For they were *like the sands of the sea* (Hosea 1:10), so greatly did they outnumber us in men, arms, horses, wagons, and all the trappings of war. . . . Just as it was once, so was it again: *The kings of the earth rose up, and came together against the Lord and against Christ* (Psalms 2:2), and against our lord king, who was *anointed with the oil of gladness* (Psalms 44:8). . . . Very few foreigners fought on the side of the English; I heard an estimate that there were only twenty or thirty in the entire army. What chance did this small division of the English army have against such a multitude of Frenchmen and their companies of mercenaries?

. . . There fell in battle on the French side the most courageous king of Bohemia, as well as the duke of Lorraine and the count of Alençon, who was the French king's brother, and great numbers of counts, barons, knights and nobles, and quite a few were captured besides. Finally, the English saw the last remnant of the army take flight, just as the great multitude of Philistines was driven from their outpost by Jonathan, son of King Saul, and his armsbearer (1 Samuel 14:1–10). On our side, not a single lord, knight, or squire fell or was gravely wounded, and only a very few that I know of were captured. Is it possible that this was accomplished wholly through the power of the English king? No! God forbid that anyone should say so or even think so.

Behold, when once *one pursued one thousand and two put to flight ten thousand*, it was credited to Moses. *Because*, it is said, *God sold them and shut them away* (Deuteronomy 32:30). Therefore he warned the people lest any should *say in his heart, 'My own strength and the strength*

of my hand have achieved all this for me.' But remember, it is said, *the Lord your God, who has given you strength* (Deuteronomy 8:17–18). On this account that most famous king and prophet David, who achieved wonderful victories when he killed the lion and the bear and Goliath, strongest of all, said, *The king is not saved by a great army, nor shall the giant be saved by his own strength. Vain is the horse for safety, nor shall he be saved by his own strength* (Psalms 32:16–19). . . .

Nor have such miraculous events ceased to occur in modern times. For I heard that when the general of the English army who lately fought against the Scots received word that a certain lord was expected to come at any moment with 10,000 reinforcements, he replied, "What need is there for such an effort, given the justness of our cause and the nature of our enemies? I know that victory never lies in the numbers of men, but in the hand of God alone (cf. 1 Maccabees 3:19). If God wished to punish us with defeat on account of our sins, he would do so even if we had twice as many troops, or even more, and if he wishes to aid us, we already have more than enough men. And, placing his hope in God, he engaged the enemy beside the *glorious king who is strong and mighty in battle* (Psalms 23:8), and he joyfully triumphed. I have also heard with my own ears from certain experienced soldiers present here in our midst, who assert they have never witnessed anything so impossible-seeming in any battle in which the English army has taken part during the past sixty years or so, when a smaller, weaker force has gained the victory over one so much larger and stronger. Therefore, let no one diminish such a victory by attributing it to his own power.

Questions: How does Bradwardine account for the English victory at Crécy? How does his description of the battle compare with Froissart's (doc. 78)? How does Bradwardine connect the battles of Crécy and Neville's Cross? How might English soldiers have responded to such a sermon?

80. The Black Death

While the Great Famine had already brought population growth to a halt, it was the Black Death that had a truly long-term catastrophic impact on the population and structures of medieval Europe. The bubonic plague arrived in southern Europe from the east in 1347 and quickly spread northward; by the end of 1349, according to modern estimates, some two-fifths of Europe's population had died from it. Henry Knighton's chronicle conveys the fear and helplessness many

contemporaries felt as the Black Death swept across England, while the valuation of Wood Eaton is suggestive of how the plague threatened the established order in the countryside.

Source: Knighton's chronicle, trans. Dorothy Hughes, *Illustrations of Chaucer's England* (London: Longmans, Green, & Company, 1918), pp. 145–49; revised; Valuation of the manor of Wood Eaton, trans. E. Amt from *Eynsham Cartulary*, ed. H.E. Salter (Oxford: Oxford Historical Society, 1908), vol. 2, pp. 19–20.

Henry Knighton's Chronicle

In this year there was a general mortality among men throughout the whole world. It broke out first in India, and spread from there to Tarsus, then to the Saracens, and at last reached the Christians and Jews; so that in the space of a single year, namely, from Easter to Easter, as was rumored in the papal court at Rome, 8,000 legions of men [some 23,000,000] perished in those distant regions, besides Christians. . . .

Then the dreadful pestilence made its way through the coast by Southampton, and reached Bristol, where almost the whole of the town perished, surprised, as it were, by sudden death; for few languished in their beds more than two or three days, or even half a day. Then this cruel death spread on all sides, following the course of the sun [from east to west]. And there died in the small parish of St. Leonard at Leicester more than 380 persons; 400 in the parish of Holy Cross; 700 in the parish of St. Margaret's, Leicester; and so on, a great multitude in every parish.

Then the bishop of Lincoln sent notice throughout the whole diocese, giving power to all priests, regular as well as secular clergy, to hear confessions and give absolution to all persons with full episcopal authority, except only in case of debtors. And in these cases, the debtor was to pay the debt, if he could, while he lived, or others were to be appointed to do so from his property after his death. In the same way, the pope gave full remission of all sins to all who received absolution on their deathbeds, and granted that this power should last until the next Easter, and that everyone might choose his own confessor.

In the same year there was a great murrain of sheep everywhere in the kingdom, so that in one place more than 5,000 sheep died in a single pasture; and they rotted so that neither bird nor beast would go near them. All things were very cheap, owing to the general fear of death, since very few people paid any heed to riches or property of any kind. A horse that was formerly worth 40s. could be bought for

half a mark, a fat ox for 4s., a cow for 12d., a heifer for 6d., a fat wether [a castrated ram] for 4d., a sheep for 3d., a lamb for 2d., a large pig for 5d., and a stone [12.5 lbs] of wool was worth 9d. Sheep and oxen strayed at large through the fields and among the crops, and as there were none to drive them off or herd them, they perished in remote by-ways and hedges in inestimable numbers in every district, because there was such scarcity of servants that no one knew what to do. For there was no memory of such a great and terrible mortality since the time of Vortigern, king of the Britons, in whose day, as Bede testifies, there were not enough survivors to bury the dead.

In the following autumn a reaper could not be hired for less than 8d. with his food, nor a mower for less than 10d. with his food. Because of this, many crops rotted in the fields for lack of men to harvest them. But in the year of the pestilence, as has been said above, there was such a great abundance of all kinds of corn that they had scarcely any value.

When they heard of the dreadful pestilence in England, the Scots concluded that it had come about at the hand of an avenging God, and it was rumored that they would swear "by the foul death of England." Thus, believing a terrible vengeance had overtaken the English, they gathered in the forest at Selkirk with the intention of invading the realm of England, when the fierce mortality overtook them and thinned their numbers by sudden and terrible death, so that 5,000 perished within a short time. As for the rest, the strong and feeble alike were preparing to return to their own country when they were surprised by the English, who killed a very great number of them.

Master Thomas Bradwardine was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury by the pope, and when he returned to England he came to London and died within two days. He was renowned above all other clerks in Christendom, especially in theology and the other liberal arts. At this time there was such a shortage of priests everywhere that many churches were left destitute, without divine services, masses, matins, vespers, or sacraments. A chaplain could scarcely be had for less than £10 or 10 marks, and whereas when there was an abundance of priests before the pestilence a chaplain could be had for 4, 5, or 11 marks, with his board, at this time there was scarcely one willing to accept a vicarage at £20 or 20 marks. Within a short time, however, vast numbers of men whose wives had died in the pestilence flocked to take holy orders, but many of them were illiterate and, as it were, mere laymen, able to read only a little, and that without understanding.

Meanwhile, the king sent notice into all the counties of the realm that reapers and other laborers should not be paid more than they had been accustomed to receive, under a penalty defined by statute, and

he introduced a statute for this purpose. But the laborers were so arrogant and hostile that they paid no heed to the king's order, and if anyone wanted to hire them he was obliged to pay them whatever they asked, and so either lose his fruits and crops or satisfy their greed and arrogance. But the king levied heavy fines upon abbots, priors, knights of greater and lesser degree, and others of all ranks throughout the countryside when it became known to him that they did not observe his ordinance, and gave higher wages to their laborers contrary to the law. He fined some 100s., others 40s. or 20s., according as they were able to pay. Moreover, he took 20s. from each ploughland in the kingdom, thus raising an additional "fifteenth" [a customary form of taxation].

Then the king ordered many laborers to be arrested and imprisoned, but many escaped to the forests and woods for a time, while those who were caught were fined heavily. Others were released from prison on condition that they swore that they would not take wages higher than had formerly been the custom. . . . After the pestilence, many buildings of all sizes fell into ruin in cities, towns, and borough for lack of inhabitants, and in the countryside many villages and hamlets were left deserted, and all their houses empty, for all who had lived in them were dead; and it seemed likely that these hamlets would never again be inhabited. In the following winter there was such a shortage of servants of every kind as had never been seen before. For the sheep and cattle wandered in all directions without herdsman, and all manner of things were left uncared for. Thus necessities became so expensive that what had previously been worth 1d. was now worth 4d. or 5d. Besides, the great men of the land, and lesser lords who had tenants, remitted the payment of their rents out of fear the tenants should otherwise depart, on account of the scarcity of servants and the high price of everything. Some remitted half their rents, some more or less, some for one, two, or three years depending on the agreements they were able to make. Similarly, those who had leased lands to tenants in return for labor, as is the custom with villeins, were obliged to relieve and remit them on easier terms, in the form of small rents, lest their houses should be ruined beyond repair and their lands remain uncultivated.

Valuation of the Manor of Wood Eaton, Oxfordshire

Walter Dolle, a virgater, holds a messuage, consisting of 18 acres of arable and 2 acres of meadow as one virgate [a variable measure of 20 to 30 acres, depending on the quality of land]. He used to pay, if the messuage was at farm [if he received the profits of the land for a fixed annual payment] 5s. in rent; do one plowing, with food provided by

the lord; supply one hen; supply eggs at Easter; pay pannage [a fee to pasture pigs in woodland]; harrow for one day, harrowing 3 rods of land [a rod equaled 16.5 feet] as a day's work; hoe for one day with one man; cart hay for a day; and perform three boon-works [days of work at the lord's request] with three men in autumn, with no food provided by the lord, and a fourth boon-work with the same number of men, with a meal provided by the lord.

But when it was not at farm he would work for five days any week from Michaelmas [29 September] to the feast of Saint Martin [11 November]; and for four days any week from Martinmas to the feast of Saint John the Baptist [24 June]; and do carrying service on Sundays, if necessary, as far as Eynsham [a distance of seven miles]. He also paid pannage; he paid aid [a portion of his produce]; he paid toll when he brewed [ale] for resale. He could not sell any ox, male or female foal, or let his daughter marry, without his lord's permission. For one day-work, he threshed one measure of wheat—four of which make seven bushels—two measures of barley, three measures of oats, or one measure of beans and peas; or, when he was digging a ditch, a day-work was one perch [5.5 yards] long and as deep as two bushels; or, when he was making hedges, a day-work was two perches long.

If the messuage was at farm without the customary services, he collected nuts [for the lord] in the lord's wood for one day, and he took two loads or four bundles of wood to court at Christmas.

At the time of the mortality of men, known as the pestilence, which was in A.D. 1349, scarcely two tenants remained in the said manor [of Wood Eaton], and they wanted to leave, unless Brother Nicholas of Upton, who was at that time abbot [and lord] of the manor, would renegotiate with them and other new tenants who were arriving. He made the following agreement with them:

That Walter and the other tenants of this manor who have the same status would pay a fee to the lord to take possession of their tenements, for the lord's benefit; and they would come to all the [lord's] courts; they would give their best animal as heriot; they would not let their daughters marry, or sell an ox or a male or female foal, without the lord's permission. At each of the two sowings, they would do three boon-works or plowings, using their own ploughs if they had them, with a meal provided by the lord. Each would do three harvest boon-works with two men, with no meal from the lord, and a fourth harvest boon-work with the same number of men and a meal provided by the lord. And each would reap the lord's meadow or grain for twelve days with no meal provided. And each would pay an annual rent of 12s. and 4d., as long as it pleases the lord, and may it please the lord forever, because the previous services were not worth as much. But let the lords in the future do as seems most suitable to

them.

Questions: How, according to Knighton, did the Black Death impact the society, religious life, and economy of fourteenth-century England?Why might both the tenants and the lord of Wood Eaton feel they had made a better deal after the plague?

81. Post-Plague Wage and Price Regulations

As working people found themselves in demand and able to earn higher wages, as they moved around and negotiated for better terms of employment, and as land became a glut on the market and rents fell, the response of the authorities was to try to legislate their way back to pre-plague conditions.

Source: Ordinance of laborers, trans. G.C. Lee, *Source-Book of English History: Leading Documents* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1900), pp. 206–8, revised; London regulations, trans. H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth, and XVth Centuries* (London: Longmans, Green, & Company, 1868), pp. 250–51, 253–58; revised.

The Ordinance of Laborers, 1349

Because a great part of the people, and especially of workmen and servants, have lately died in the pestilence, many, seeing the necessities of masters and great scarcity of servants, will not serve unless they receive excessive wages, and others, preferring to beg in idleness rather than by labor to get their living; we, considering the grievous incommodities which may result from the lack, especially of plowmen and such laborers, have, upon deliberation and treaty with the prelates and the nobles and learned men assisting us, with their unanimous counsel ordained the following:

That every man and woman of our realm of England, of whatever condition he be, free or bond, able in body, and under the age of sixty years, not living by trade, nor exercising any craft, nor having anything of his own upon which he may live, nor land of his own to till, and not serving any other, if he be required to serve in suitable service, his estate considered, he shall be bound to serve anyone who shall require him to do so. And he shall take only the wages, livery, reward, or salary which were accustomed to be given in the places where he is obliged to serve, during the twentieth year of our reign in England [1347], or five or six other common years next before. Provided always, that the lords be preferred before others in their

bondmen or their land tenants, so in their service to be retained; so that, nevertheless, the said lords shall retain no more workers than they need. And if any such man or woman being so required to serve will not do the same, and if that be proved by two true men before the sheriff, bailiff, lord, or constable of the town where this shall be done, he shall immediately be taken by them and committed to the nearest jail, there to remain under strait keeping, till he find surety to serve in the form aforesaid.

If any reaper, mower, other workman or servant, of whatever estate or condition he be, retained in any man's service, leaves the said service without reasonable cause or license before the term agreed, he shall have pain of imprisonment; and no one, under the same penalty, shall presume to receive or retain such a one in his service.

No one, moreover, shall pay or promise to pay to anyone more wages, liveries, meed, or salary than was accustomed, as is before said; nor shall anyone in any other manner demand or receive them, upon pain of a penalty twice that which shall have been so paid, promised, required or received, to him who thereof shall feel himself aggrieved; and if none such will sue, then the same shall be applied to any of the people that will sue; and such suit shall be made in the court of the lord of the place where such case shall happen.

And if lords of towns or manors, or their servants, presume in any point to defy this present ordinance, then suit shall be made against them in the form aforesaid, . . . for the penalty three times that which was paid or promised by them or their servants. And if any before this present ordinance has covenanted with any so to serve for higher wages [than are lawful], he shall not be bound, by reason of the said covenant, to pay more than at another time was accustomed to be paid to such a person; nor, under the same penalty, shall he presume to pay more.

Also, saddlers, skinners, white tawyers, cordwainers, tailors, smiths, carpenters, masons, tilers, shipwrights, carters, and all other artificers and workmen, shall not take for their labor and workmanship more than was accustomed to be paid to such persons in the said twentieth year, and other common years next preceding, as said above, in the place where they shall happen to work; and if any man takes more he shall be committed to the nearest jail, as said above.

Also, that butchers, fishmongers, innkeepers, brewers, bakers, poulterers, and all other sellers of all manner of victuals shall be bound to sell the same victuals for a reasonable price, having respect to the price that such victuals be sold at in the places adjoining, so

that the same sellers receive moderate, and not excessive gains, as are reasonably to be required according to the distance of the place from which the said victuals were carried; and if anyone sell such victuals in any other manner, and be convicted of this, in the manner and form aforesaid, he shall pay two times what he so received to the party injured, or to any other person that will sue on his behalf. And the mayors and bailiffs of cities, boroughs, merchant towns, and others, and of the ports and maritime places, shall have power to inquire of each and all those who shall in any thing offend against this ordinance, and to levy the said penalty. . . . And if the same mayors and bailiffs are negligent in carrying out these provisions, and are so convicted before our justices, to be assigned by us, then the same mayors and bailiffs shall be compelled by the same justices to pay three times the price of the thing so sold to the injured party, or to anyone else that will sue in his place. . . .

And because many strong beggars refuse to labor as long as they may live by begging, giving themselves to idleness and vice, and sometimes resorting to theft and other abominations; no one, upon pain of imprisonment, shall, under the color of pity or alms, give anything to such beggars, or presume to favor them in their idleness, so that thereby they may be compelled to labor for their necessary living.

London Wage and Price Regulations, 1350

To amend and redress the damages and grievances which the good folks of the city, rich and poor, have suffered within the past year, by reason of masons, carpenters, plasterers, tilers, and all manner of laborers, who take immeasurably more than they have been accustomed to take, by assent of Walter Turk, mayor, the aldermen, and all the commonalty of the city, the points below are ordained to be held and firmly observed for ever; that is to say:

In the first place, that the masons, between the feasts of Easter and Saint Michael [29 September], shall take no more by the working-day than 6d., without victuals or drink; and from the feast of Saint Michael to Easter, no more than 5d. by the working-day. And upon feast days, when they do not work, they shall take nothing. And for the making or mending of their implements they shall take nothing.

Also, that the carpenters shall take, for the same time, in the same manner.

Also, that the plasterers shall take the same as the masons and carpenters take.

Also, that the tilers shall take for the working-day, from the Feast

of Easter to Saint Michael 5½d., and from the feast of Saint Michael 4½d.

Also, that the laborers shall take in the first half year 3½d., and in the other half 3d.

Also, that the master daubers shall take between the Feasts of Easter and Saint Michael 5d., and in the other half year 4d.; and their laborers are to take the same as the laborers of the tilers.

Also, that the sawyers shall take in the same manner as the masons and carpenters take.

Also, that no one shall pay more to the workmen aforesaid, on pain of paying 40s. to the commonalty, without any release therefrom; and he who shall take more than the above, shall go to prison for 40 days.

Also, that the thousand of tiles shall be sold for 5s., at the very highest.

Also, that the hundred of lime shall be sold at 5s., at the very highest.

Also, that a cart with sand, and with clay, that comes from Aldgate as far as the Conduit, shall take 3d. for its hire; and if the cart shall pass the Conduit, let it take 3½d. And in the same manner, let the carts from Cripplegate to Cheap take 3d.; and if they pass that place, 3½ d. And if the cart with sand shall not enter the city, but only bring it to serve folks who live in the suburbs outside the gates, let it take 2d.: and let the carts be of capacity of one quarter, well heaped up, as they used to be.

Also, that carters, called “waterleaders,” shall take 1½d. for a cart-load brought from Dovegate to Cheap; and from Castle Baynard to Cheap, in the same manner; and if they pass beyond Cheap, they are to take one penny [more]; and if they do not come as far as Cheap, 1¼ d.

Also, that carts which bring wares coming from beyond the sea shall take 4d. for the trip from Woolwharf to Cheap.

Also, that the cart which brings [long pieces of] firewood . . . shall take for the hundred, at Cripplegate, 6d., and for the hundred of faggots [short pieces] 4d.

Also, that the tailors shall take for making a gown, garnished with fine cloth and silk, 18d.

Also, for a man’s gown, garnished with linen thread and with buckram [coarse linen cloth stiffened with paste], 14d.

Also, for a cote and hood, 10d.

Also, for a long gown for a woman, garnished with fine cloth or with silk, 2s. 6d.

Also, for a pair of sleeves, to change, 4d.

Also, that the porters of the city shall not take more for their labor than they used to take in former times, on pain of imprisonment.

Also, that no vintner shall be so daring as to sell a gallon of wine of Vernaccia for more than 2s., and wine of Crete, wine of the River, Piement, and Clare, and Malveisin, at 16d. . . .

Also, that no one shall go to meet those who are bringing victuals or other wares to sell in the city by land or by water, for the purpose of buying them or bargaining for them, before they have come to certain pre-assigned places, where they ought to be sold; on pain of forfeiture of the victuals and other wares, and of their bodies being committed to prison, until they have been sufficiently punished, at the discretion of the mayor and aldermen.

Also, that the wheat and barley which comes toward the city for sale by land or by water, shall come wholly into the markets, and shall there be sold to all folks by the hands of those who bring the same, for the support and sustenance of their households, and to the bakers for serving the people. . . .

Also, that a pair of shoes of cordovan shall be sold for 6d., and a pair of shoes of cow-leather for 6d., and a pair of boots of cordovan and of cow-leather for 3s. 6d.

Also, that a pair of spurs shall be sold for 6d., and a better pair for 8d., and the best at 10d. or 12d., at the very highest.

Also, that a pair of gloves of sheepskin shall be sold for 1d., and a better pair at 1½d., and a pair at 2d., so going on to the very highest.

Also, that the shearmen shall not take more than they were accustomed to take; that is to say, for [shearing] a short cloth 12d., and for [shearing] a long cloth 2s.; and for a cloth of striped serge, for getting rid of the stripes, and for shearing the same, 2s.

Also, that the farriers shall not take more than they were accustomed to take before the time of the pestilence, on pain of imprisonment and heavy ransom; that is to say, for a horse-shoe of six nails 1½ d., and for a horse-shoe of eight nails 2d.; and for taking off a horse-shoe of six nails or of eight, ½d.; and for the shoe of a courser 2½ d., and the shoe of a charger 3d.; and for taking off the shoe of a courser or charger, 1d.

Also, if any workman or laborer will not work or labor as is above ordained, let him be taken and kept in prison until he shall have found good surety, and sworn to do that which is so ordained. And if anyone shall absent himself, or go out of the city, because he does not wish to work and labor, as is before mentioned, and afterward by chance be found within the city, let him be imprisoned for a quarter of the year, and forfeit his chattels which he has in the city, and then let him find surety, and make oath, as before stated. And if he will not do this, let

him forswear the city forever.

Also, that the servants in the houses of good folks shall not take more than they were wont to take before the time of the pestilence; on pain of imprisonment and heavy ransom, and of paying to the city double that sum which they shall have taken in excess. And he who shall pay more than he used to pay before the above-mentioned time, shall pay to the city three times what he shall have so paid in excess.

Also, that no cook shall take more for putting a capon or rabbit in a pasty than 1d., on pain of imprisonment. . . .

Also, that four good men, or two, of every ward, shall be chosen to keep all these points; and if victuals or other wares coming toward the city by land or by water shall be sold in any other manner than is before mentioned, let the same be forfeited by award of the mayor [and] aldermen; and let one part thereof be delivered to the chamberlain, to the use of the commonalty, and a second part to the sheriffs, if they or their officers have readily aided the wardens in seizing the said things; and the wardens shall have the third part for their trouble; saving always to the sheriffs what shall appertain to their farm [the royal revenues], according to the purport of the charters and liberties of the city. And he who shall contravene any above-written article . . . shall pay to the commonalty 40s. And it shall be fully lawful for the mayor, aldermen, and good folks of the wards sworn, or others in their places, if any of them have been taken by God unto himself, to increase or diminish, or make amendment in, the articles aforesaid, for the common profit, according as the times shall shape themselves.

Questions: Whose perspective do these regulations represent? What attitudes toward laborers and craftspeople are expressed? How were these regulations to be enforced? How are these regulations different from those of 1315 (doc. 71)? Were these measures likely to succeed?

82. Chronicle Accounts of the Peasants' Revolt

The rising expectations of ordinary people in post-plague England, along with the repressive actions of their lords and employers, led to escalating tensions. In 1381 these broke out in the Peasants' Revolt, the first rebellion of English commoners. The specific event that sparked it was a poll tax, a flat tax on every "poll" or head, which was burdensome to many (although many exemptions were given out) and the collection of which involved some notoriously ill-behaved

officials. But the accounts of the rebellion, including those excerpted below, reveal more deep-seated and wide-ranging grievances. Readers should be aware that Knighton's dating of the revolt is somewhat confused.

Source: trans. E.P. Cheyney, *Readings in English History Drawn from the Original Sources* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1922), pp. 260–65; revised.

Froissart's Account of a Sermon by John Ball

Of this imagination was a foolish priest in the county of Kent called John Ball, who, for his foolish words, had been confined three times in the archbishop of Canterbury's prison; for on the Sundays after mass, when the people were going out of the minster, this priest often used to go into the cloister and preach, and made the people assemble about him, and would say, "Ah, ye good people, things are not going well in England, nor shall they until everything is held in common, and until there be no villeins nor gentlemen, but all be united together, and the lords be no greater masters than we be. What have we done, that we deserve to be thus kept in serfdom? We all come from one father and one mother, Adam and Eve; how, then, can they say or show that they be greater lords than we be, except that they cause us to earn and labor for what they spend? They are clothed in velvet and camlet furred with grise, while we be clothed in poor cloth; they have their wines, spices, and good bread, while we have the drawing out of the chaff to eat and water to drink; they dwell in fair houses while we have pain and travail, rain and wind in the fields; and they keep and maintain their estates by the fruit of our labors. We are called their bondmen, and unless we readily do them service, we are beaten; and we have no sovereign to whom we may complain, nor that will hear us and do right by us. Let us go to the king—he is young—and show him what serfdom we be in, and show him how we will have it otherwise, or else we will provide ourselves with some remedy, either by fairness or otherwise." Thus John Ball preached on Sundays, when the people issued out of the churches in the villages; wherefore many of the lowly people loved him, and those who had no good intentions said how he said truth; and so they would murmur together in the fields and in the lanes as they went along together, affirming how John Ball spoke the truth.

Henry Knighton's Chronicle

In the year 1381, the second of the reign of King Richard II, during the month of May, . . . that impious band began to assemble from

Kent, from Surrey, and from many other surrounding places. Apprentices also, leaving their masters, rushed to join these. And so they gathered on Blackheath, where, forgetting themselves in their multitude, and neither contented with their former cause nor appeased by smaller crimes, they unmercifully planned greater and worse evils and determined not to desist from their wicked undertaking until they should have entirely extirpated the nobles and great men of the kingdom.

So at first they directed their course of iniquity to a certain town of the archbishop of Canterbury called Maidstone, in which there was a jail of the said archbishop, and in the said jail was a certain John Ball, a chaplain who was considered among the laity to be a very famous preacher; many times in the past he had foolishly spread abroad the word of God, by mixing tares with wheat, too pleasing to the laity and extremely dangerous to the liberty of ecclesiastical law and order, execrably introducing into the Church of Christ many errors among the clergy and laymen. For this reason he had been tried as a clerk and convicted in accordance with the law, being seized and assigned to this same jail for his permanent abiding place. On [12 June,] the Wednesday before the feast of the Consecration, they came into Surrey to the jail of the king at Marshalsea, where they broke into the jail without delay, forcing all who were imprisoned there to come with them to help them; and whomever they met, whether they were pilgrims or others of whatever condition, they forced to go with them.

On [14 June,] the Friday following the feast of the Consecration, they came over the bridge to London; here no one resisted them, although, as was said, the citizens of London knew of their approach a long time before; and so they directed their way to the Tower where the king was surrounded by a great throng of knights, esquires, and others. It was said that there were in the Tower about one hundred and fifty knights, together with one hundred and eighty others, with the mother of the king, the duchess of Britanny, and many other ladies. There was present also Henry, earl of Derby, son of John, duke of Lancaster, who was still a youth, as well as Simon of Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor of England, and Brother Robert de Hales, prior of the Hospital of England and treasurer of the king.

John Leg and a certain John, a Minorite, a man active in warlike deeds, skilled in natural sciences, an intimate friend of Lord John, duke of Lancaster, hastened with three others to the Tower for refuge, intending to hide themselves under the wings of the king. The people had determined to kill the archbishop and the others above mentioned with him; for this reason they came to this place, and afterward they fulfilled their vows. The king, however, desired to free the archbishop

and his friends from the jaws of the wolves, so he sent to the people a command to assemble outside the city, at a place called Mile End, in order to speak with the king and to discuss their designs with him. . . .

But the king advanced to the assigned place, while many of the wicked mob kept following him. . . . More, however, remained where they were. When the others had come to the king they complained that they had been seriously oppressed by many hardships and that their condition of servitude was unbearable, and that they neither could nor would endure it any longer. The king, yielding to their petition for the sake of peace, and on account of the violence of the times, granted them a charter with the great seal, to the effect that all men in the kingdom of England should be free and of free condition, and should remain, both for themselves and their heirs, free from all kinds of servitude and villeinage forever. This charter was rejected and declared null and void by the king and the great men of the kingdom in the Parliament held at Westminster in the same year, after the feast of Saint Michael [29 September].

While these things were going on, behold those degenerate sons, who still remained, summoned their father the archbishop with his above-mentioned friends without any force or attack, without sword or arrow, or any other form of compulsion, but only with force of threats and excited outcries, inviting those men to death. But they [the archbishop and his companions] did not protest or resist, but, as sheep before the shearers, going forth barefoot and with uncovered heads, unarmed, they offered themselves freely to an undeserved death, just as if they had deserved this punishment for some murder or theft. And so, alas! before the king returned, seven were killed at Tower Hill. . . .

Whatever representatives of the law they found or whatever men served the kingdom in a judicial capacity, these they killed without delay.

On the following day, which was Saturday, they gathered in Smithfield, where there came to them in the morning the king, who although only a youth in years yet was already well versed in wisdom. Their leader, whose real name was Wat Tyler, approached him; already they were calling him by the other name of Jack Straw. He kept close to the king, addressing him on behalf of the rest. He carried in his hand an unsheathed weapon which they call a dagger, and, as if in childish play, kept tossing it from one hand to the other in order that he might seize the opportunity, if the king should refuse his requests, to strike the king suddenly (as was commonly believed); and from this thing the greatest fear arose among those about the king as to what might be the outcome.

They begged from the king that all the warrens, waters as well as park and wood, should be common to all, so that both a poor man and a rich should be able to hunt animals freely everywhere in the kingdom—in the streams, in the fish ponds, in the woods, and in the forest; and that he might be free to chase the hare in the fields, and that he might do these things and others like them without objection. When the king hesitated to grant this concession Jack Straw came nearer, and, speaking threatening words, seized with his hand the bridle of the king's horse very daringly. When John de Walworth, a citizen of London, saw this, thinking that death threatened the king, seized a sword and pierced Jack Straw in the neck. Seeing this, another soldier, by name Radulf Standyche, pierced his side with another sword. He sank back, slowly letting go with his hands and feet, and died. A great cry and much mourning arose, as the people cried out, "Our leader is slain." When this dead man had been meanly dragged along by the hands and feet into the church of St. Bartholomew, which was nearby, as many as ten thousand, as it is believed, withdrew from the band, and, vanishing, betook themselves to flight. . . .

After these things had happened and quiet had been restored, the time came when the king caused the offenders to be punished. So Lord Robert Tresillian, one of the judges, was sent by order of the king to inquire into the uprisings against the peace and to punish the guilty. Wherever he came he spared no one, but caused great slaughter. And just as those evildoers plotted in hostile manner against the judges, Lord John de Candishe and any others they could find, by bringing them to capital punishment, and against all those skilled in the laws of the country whom they could reach, and not sparing any one of them, but punishing them by capital punishment, just so this judge spared no one, but demanded misfortune for misfortune. For whoever was accused before him in this said cause, whether justly or out of spite, he immediately sentenced to death. He ordered some to be beheaded, others to be hanged, still others to be dragged through the city and hanged in four different parts of it; others to be disemboweled, and the entrails to be burned before them while they were still alive, and afterward to be decapitated, quartered, and hanged in four parts of the city, according to the greatness of the crime and its punishment. John Ball was captured at Coventry and led to St. Albans, where, by order of the king, he was drawn and hanged, then quartered, and his quarters sent to four different places.

Questions: Who were the rebels? What did they want, and why? What was the attitude of the authorities toward the rebel demands? Can you detect anything of lasting significance in these events?

83. A Peasants' Revolt Trial

After the failure of the Peasants' Revolt, there were swift, severe retaliations not only against those suspected of involvement but also of those suspected of sympathizing with the rebels. While over three thousand people were permitted to purchase royal pardons, others were not so lucky; surviving trial records show that at least one hundred rebels were sentenced to death by hanging. One such trial transcript is printed below.

Source: trans. A.E. Bland, P.A. Brown, and R.H. Tawney, *English Economic History: Select Documents* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), pp. 109–10.

Cambridge. John Shirle of the county of Nottingham was arrested because it was found that he was a vagabond in various counties for the duration of the disturbance, insurrection and tumult, carrying lies and worthless talk from district to district whereby the peace of the lord king could be speedily broken and the people disquieted and disturbed; and among other dangerous words, to wit, after the proclamation of the peace of the lord king made on the aforesaid day and year, the [justices assigned by] the lord king being in the town and sitting, he said in a tavern in Bridge Street, Cambridge, where many were assembled to listen to his news and worthless talk, that the stewards of the lord king, the justices and many other officers and ministers of the king were more deserving of being drawn and hanged and suffering other lawful pains and torments, than John Ball, chaplain, a traitor and felon lawfully convicted. For he said that [John Ball] was condemned to death falsely, unjustly and for envy by the said ministers with the king's assent, because he was a true and good man, prophesying things useful to the commons of the realm and telling of wrongs and oppressions done to the people by the king and his ministers; and his death shall not go unpunished, but within a short space he would well reward both the king and his officers and ministers; which sayings and threats redound to the prejudice of the crown of the lord the king and the contempt and manifest disquiet of the people. And as a result the aforesaid John Shirle was promptly brought by the sheriff before the aforesaid [justices] in Cambridge Castle, and was charged touching these events and diligently examined as well touching his conversation as touching his tarrying and his estate, and the same being acknowledged by him before the aforesaid representatives [of the king], his evil behavior and condition is plainly manifest and clear. And as a result they asked for trustworthy witnesses at that time in his presence, when the aforesaid

lies, evil words, threats and worthless talk were spoken by him, and the witnesses, being sworn to speak the truth concerning this matter, testify that all the aforesaid words imputed to him were truly spoken by him; and he, again examined, did not deny the charges. Therefore by the discretion of the said representatives he was hanged; and order was made to the escheator to enquire diligently into his lands and tenements, goods and chattels, and to make due execution thereof for the lord the king.

Questions: With what crimes was the defendant charged? What evidence was brought against him? What was the penalty? What does this text tell us about reactions to the Peasants' Revolt?

84. Ordinances of the Guild of Saint Katharine at Norwich

Guilds, or societies for mutual assistance, regulated the spiritual as well as economic and social lives of late medieval townspeople. Religious guilds like that of Saint Katherine at Norwich enhanced parish life, promoted the veneration of particular saints, and provided venues for laypeople to engage in pious and charitable acts.

Source: trans. T. Smith, *English Guilds: The Original Ordinances of More Than One Hundred English Gilds*, ed. L.T. Smith (London, 1870), repr. in *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, ed. E.P. Cheyney, 1st ser. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Department of History, 1895), vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 34–35; revised.

To the most excellent prince and lord, our lord Richard [II], by the grace of God, king of England and France, and to his council in his chancery, his humble lieges, the guardians of a certain fraternity of Saint Katharine the virgin and martyr, in the church of Saints Simon and Jude in Norwich, all subjection and reverence and honor. By virtue of a certain proclamation recently made according to royal command by the sheriff of the county of Norfolk at Norwich, we certify to your excellency according to the form of the aforesaid proclamation, that our aforesaid fraternity was founded in the year 1307, by certain parishioners of the said church, and by others devoted to God, to the honor of the Holy Trinity, and of the blessed Virgin Mary, and of Saint Katharine the virgin and martyr, and of all saints, and for keeping up an increase of light in the said church, under certain ordinances made and issued with the common consent of the brothers and sisters of the aforesaid fraternity. The tenor of these ordinances follows in these words.

In the first place it is ordained with one assent that all the brothers

and sisters of this guild shall come together to the parish church of Saints Simon and Jude, in Norwich, on the day of Saint Katharine [25 November], to go in procession with their candle, which is borne before them, and to hear the mass of Saint Katharine in the aforesaid church; and at that mass every brother and sister shall offer a half-penny.

And also it is ordained that if any brother or sister shall be absent at the procession aforesaid, or at mass, or at offering, he shall pay to the chattels of the guild two pounds of wax, but they may be excused reasonably.

And also it is ordained, that when a brother or a sister dies, every brother and sister shall come to the dirge and to mass; and at the mass, each shall offer a half-penny, and give a half-penny for alms, and a penny for a mass to be sung for the soul of the dead. And at the dirge, every brother and sister that is lettered [literate] shall say, for the soul of the dead, the office of the dead and the dirge, in the place where they shall come together; and every brother and sister that is not lettered shall say for the soul of the dead, twenty times, the Paternoster, with the *Ave Maria*; and from the chattels of the guild shall there be two candles of wax, of sixteen pounds weight, around the body of the deceased.

And also it is ordained, that if any brother or sister die outside of the city of Norwich, within eight miles, six of the brothers that have the chattels of the guild in their keeping shall go to that brother or sister that is dead; and if it be lawful, they shall carry the body to Norwich, or else it will be buried there; and if the body be buried outside of Norwich all the brothers and sisters shall be warned to come to the foresaid church of Saints Simon and Jude, and there shall be done for the soul of the dead all of the service, lights and offerings as if the body were there present. And if any brother or sister be absent at the office of the dead and the dirge, or at mass, he shall pay two pounds of wax to the chattels of the guild, unless he be reasonably excused. And nevertheless he shall do for the dead as it is said before.

And also it is ordained that, on the morrow after the guild day all the brothers and sisters shall come to the aforesaid church, and there sing a requiem mass for the souls of the brothers and sisters of this guild, and for all Christian souls. . . . And whoever is absent shall pay a pound of wax.

And also it is ordained that if any brother or sister fall into poverty, through adventure of the world, his estate shall be helped by every brother and sister of the guild, with a farthing [¼ d.] each

week.

And also it is ordained by common assent that if there be any discord between brothers and sisters, that discord shall be first shown to other brothers and sisters of the guild, and by them accord shall be made, if it may be done skillfully. And if they cannot be so brought to accord, it shall be lawful for them to go to the common law. . . . And whoever acts contrary to this ordinance, he shall pay two pounds of wax to the light.

Also it is ordained, by common assent, that if any brother of this guild be chosen for office and refuse it, he shall pay two pounds of wax to the light of Saint Katharine.

Also it is ordained, by common assent, that the brothers and sisters of this guild, in the worship of Saint Katharine, shall have a livery of hoods in suit, and eat together on their guild day, at their common cost; and whoever fails to do so shall pay two pounds of wax to the light.

Also it is ordained, by common assent, that no brother or sister shall be received into this guild except by the alderman and twelve brothers of the guild.

And as to the goods and chattels of the said fraternity, we make known to your excellency, likewise, that we the aforesaid guardians have in our custody, for the use of the said fraternity, 20s. of silver.

Questions: What is the purpose of the guild? What specific benefits can its members expect? What are the members' obligations? What concerns of medieval society are evident in this text?

85. Robert Manning of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne*

This early fourteenth-century Middle English poem, composed in English by a monk who based much of it on a similar French work, offers moral instruction to a lay audience by evoking concrete examples of problem situations: tournaments, miracle plays, the care of a congregation, and the raising of children. The mention of Eli at the end of this selection refers to the story "Sir Eli and His Wicked Sons," recounted earlier in the poem.

Source: Modernized from *Robert of Brunne's* Handlyng Synne, ed. F.J. Furnivall (London: Early English Text Society, 1901), vol. 1, pp. 153–55, 160–63.

Of tournaments that are forbade
in holy Church, as men do read,
of tournaments I shall prove therein,

seven points of deadly sin:
first is pride, as thou well know'st,
vanity, pomp, and many a boast;
of rich attire there is great flaunting,
spurring her horse with much
vaunting.
Know you well this is envy
when one sees another do mastery,
some in words, some in deeds;
envy most of all him leads.
Ire and wrath cannot be late;
oft are tournaments made for hate.
If all knights loved each other well,
tournaments would never be held;

And of course they fall into
slothfulness,
they love it more than God or Mass;
And truly, there can be no doubt,
they spend more gold thereabout—
that is, they give it all to folly—
than on any deed of mercy.
And yet be very careful lest
you forget Dame Covetousness,
for she shall be foolish, in all ways,
to win a horse and some harness.
And a man shall also do robbery,
or beguile his host where he shall
stay.
Gluttony also is them among,
delicious meats do make him strong;
and gladly he drinks wine untold,
with gluttony to make him bold.
Also is there Dame Lechery;
from here comes all her mastery.
Many times, for women's sake,
knights these tournaments do make;
and when he goes to the tournament
she sends him some secret present,
and bids him do, if he loves her
best,
all that he can at her behest
for which he gets so much the worst,
that he may not sit upon his horse,

and that peradventure, in all his life,
shall he never after thrive.
Consider whether such tournaments
should more truly be called
    torments? . . .

It is forbidden him, in the decree,
miracle plays for to make or see,
for, miracles if thou begin,
it is a gathering, a site of sin.
He may in the church, through this
    reason,
portray the resurrection—
that is to say, how God rose,
God and man in strength and loss—
to make men hold to belief good,
that he rose with flesh and blood;

and he may play, without danger,
how God was born in the manger,
to make men to believe steadfastly
that he came to us through the
    Virgin Mary. . . .

A parson is slothful in holy Church
who on his sheep will not work
how they should heed his own word
and please the Church and their
    Lord.
The high Shepherd shall him blame,
for how he lets them go to shame.
If he should see in anything
that they have a lack of chastising,
unless he teach them and chastise so
that they from henceforth better do,
for them he shall, at God's assize,
be punished before the high Justice.
Also it behooves him to pray
that God, of grace, show him the
    way. . . .

Man or woman that has a child
that with bad manners grows too
    wild,
that will both mis-say and -do,

chastisement behooves them too;
But chastise them with all your might,
Otherwise you'll be in their plight.
Better were the child unborn
than lack chastising, and thus be forlorn.
Thus says the wise King Solomon
to men and women every one,
"If you want your children to be good,
give them the smart end of the rod";
and teach them good manners each one;
but take care that you break no bone. . . .
Everywhere I see this custom:
that rich men have shrews for sons —
shrews in speech and in act—
Why? They hold no one in respect.
In his youth shall he mis-say
and scorn others by the way;

then says the father, "This child's story
doesn't hang together—sorry!"
And if he learns guilefulness,
false words and deceitful looks,
his father shouldn't acquit him then;
his sly wit will be his only friend.
If he injures foes in rages,
then says his father, "He shall be courageous,
he shall be hardy, and no man dread,
he begins early to be doughty in deed."
But right so shall it him befall
as it did with Eli's bad sons all. . . .

Questions: What moral points does the poet make? How well acquainted does he seem to be with secular life? What hints does he give of his intended audience? How effective do you think such a

work would be as a means of moral instruction?

86. The Growth of Lollardy

The ideas of Oxford theologian John Wycliff (d. 1384) gave rise to a heretical movement known as Lollardy. Though his writings were condemned as unorthodox, Wycliff himself was protected by powerful friends, but in later years many of his followers were executed as heretics. As the first document shows, in towns such as Northampton Lollardy gained adherents among urban elites, who used their influence to protect heretical preachers. At the same time, open patronage of Lollardy was risky; after Richard Stormesworth complained that Northampton's mayor, John Fox, had "made all of the townspeople into Lollards," King Richard II removed Fox from office and imprisoned him. (Support for Fox and his heresy persisted in Northampton, however; after the king's deposition Fox was reelected mayor in 1399.) One year after the Northampton affair, a group of Lollards presented to Parliament the summary of their beliefs contained in the second document. As both texts show, Lollard beliefs were anticlerical, challenging the need for priests as intermediaries between God and individual believers, and in many other ways, too, foreshadowing the ideas that would one day give rise to the Protestant Reformation.

Source: trans. E. Powell and G.M. Trevelyan, *The Peasants' Rising and the Lollards: A Collection of Unpublished Documents* (London: Longmans, Green, & Company, 1899), pp. 45–48; Lollard Conclusions, trans. H. Gee and W.G. Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the English Church* (London: Macmillan, 1910), pp. 126–32; revised.

Lollards at Northampton, 1393

Richard Stormesworth of the town of Northampton makes a complaint to our sovereign lord the king [Richard II] and his council about John Fox, mayor of the said town of Northampton. That whereas it is ordained by statute and also by holy Church's laws that Lollards should be punished, the said mayor has presumed by virtue of his office to exercise royal power in the town of Northampton, authorizing Lollards to preach in spite of the bishop of Lincoln and his curates. . . . The mayor has made all of the townspeople into Lollards so that the town is governed by them, and no one dares defy them for

fear of losing their lives. All of the scoundrels infected with Lollardy that come to the said town are courteously received and maintained as if they were prophets. . . .

Last year, before the feast of Saint Hillary, the said mayor brought the parson of the church of Wynkpole, an errant Lollard, to preach at the church of All Saints in Northampton. The preacher was supported by the mayor's retinue and a group of Lollards from the town who had assembled at the church by prior agreement. The Lollard ascended the pulpit to preach, but the vicar of the church returned to the altar, in defiance, to sing the mass, and then the mayor went up to the vicar at the altar and with great indignation seized him by his vestments to force him to cease singing the mass until the preacher had finished his sermon. The vicar protested, "I cannot." Afterward the preacher preached errors and heresies to the people. Later that day, after dinner, the Lollard parson returned with the mayor and a great many Lollards to the church, where he preached errors and heresies disparaging the people's devotion to holy Church, the practice of pilgrimages to images, the presence of costly ornaments in churches, the use of gold or silver chalices for divine service, and the veneration of statues, and criticized our sovereign lord the king as well as holy Church. Upon hearing this, Richard Stormesworth, who was unaware of the Lollards' conspiracy, shouted to the preacher "Enough, enough!" to silence him, commanding him, "Come down here, you false Lollard!" but refraining from breaking the peace any further. At this, the mayor rose up, along with a great crowd of Lollards from the town as well as the countryside, and broke the peace by trying to lay hands upon the said Richard and kill him in the church. Failing to do so, certain of the Lollards armed themselves and lay in wait for Richard outside the church, intending to kill him, but when Richard came out his friends immediately rushed him back inside for fear of his enemies. Then the mayor came and arrested Richard as a peace-breaker in order to placate the Lollards. Seeing this, the crowd of Lollards was so enraged that they would have killed Richard, and he barely escaped with his life, being secretly brought to the vestry and hidden there until things calmed down. Meanwhile, all of the other people in the church who were not privy to the Lollard conspiracy fled in great doubt, fearing for their lives, and the chaplains William Broughton and Joyn Tony rang the church bells to warn the people to cease the fray. Afterward, the mayor went up into the pulpit to encourage the parson to go on with his sermon, and commanded the people to keep silent and listen to the sermon on pain of death, and the mayor remained in the pulpit next to the preacher until he had finished his sermon. When it was over, the mayor and other Lollards led the false preacher to the mayor's house, and later on returned to

the churchyard and threatened violence against anyone who would deny any part of the sermon. Now as a result the whole town has become Lollards, and no man dares to speak against them for fear of the said mayor.

The Lollard Conclusions, 1394

1. That when the Church of England began to go mad after temporalities, like its great step-mother the Roman Church, and churches were authorized by appropriation in diverse places, faith, hope, and charity began to flee from our Church, because pride, with its doleful progeny of mortal sins, claimed this under title of truth. This conclusion is general, and proved by experience, custom, and manner or fashion, as you shall afterward hear.
2. That our usual priesthood which began in Rome, pretended to be of power more lofty than the angels, is not that priesthood which Christ ordained for his apostles. . . .
3. That the law of continence enjoined to priests, which was first ordained to the prejudice of women, brings sodomy into the holy Church, but we excuse ourselves by the Bible because the decree says that we should not mention it, even though it is suspected. Reason and experience prove this conclusion: reason, because the good living of ecclesiastics must have a natural outlet or worse; experience, because the secret proof of such men is that they find delight in women. . . .
4. That the pretended miracle of the sacrament of bread drives all men, except a few, to idolatry, because they think that the body of Christ which is never away from heaven could by power of the priest's word be enclosed essentially in a little bread which they show the people; but God grant that they might be willing to believe . . . that the bread of the altar is habitually the body of Christ, for we take it that in this way any faithful man and woman can by God's law perform the sacrament of that bread without any such miracle. . . .
5. That exorcisms and blessings performed over wine, bread, water and oil, salt, wax, and incense, the stones of the altar, and church walls, over clothing, miter, cross, and pilgrims' staves, are the genuine performance of necromancy rather than of sacred theology. . . .
6. That king and bishop in one person, prelate and judge in temporal causes, curate and officer in secular office, puts any

kingdom beyond good rule. This conclusion is clearly proved because the temporal and spiritual are two halves of the entire holy Church. And so he who has applied himself to one should not meddle with the other, for no one can serve two masters. . . .

7. That special prayers for the souls of the dead offered in our Church, preferring one before another in name, are a false foundation of alms, and for that reason all houses of alms in England have been wrongly founded. This conclusion is proved by two reasons: the one is that meritorious prayer, if it is to have any effect, ought to be a work proceeding from deep charity, and perfect charity leaves out no one, for "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And so it is clear to us that the gift of temporal goods bestowed on the priesthood and houses of alms is a special incentive to private prayer which is not far from simony. . . .

8. That pilgrimages, prayers, and offerings made to blind crosses or roods, and to deaf images of wood or stone, are pretty well akin to idolatry and far from alms, and although those be forbidden and imaginary, a book of error to the lay folk, still the customary image of the Trinity is specially abominable. This conclusion God clearly proves, bidding alms to be given to the needy man because they are the image of God, and more like than wood and stone; for God did not say, "let us make wood or stone in our likeness and image," but man. . . . A corollary is that the service of the cross, performed twice in any year in our Church, is full of idolatry, for if that should, so might the nails and lance be so highly honored; then would the lips of Judas be relics indeed if any were able to possess them. . . .

9. That auricular confession which is said to be so necessary to the salvation of a man, with its pretended power of absolution, exalts the arrogance of priests and gives them opportunity for other secret conversations which we will not speak of; for both lords and ladies attest that, for fear of their confessors, they dare not speak the truth. And at the time of confession there is a ready occasion for assignation, that is, for "wooing," and other secret understandings leading to mortal sins. [Confessors] themselves say that they are God's representatives to judge every sin, to pardon and cleanse whomever they please. They say that they have the keys of heaven and of hell, and can excommunicate and bless, bind and loose, at their will, so much so that for a drink, or twelve pence, they will sell the blessing of heaven with charter and close warrant sealed with the

common seal. This conclusion is so notorious that it needs no proof. It is a corollary that the pope of Rome, who has given himself out as treasurer of the whole Church, having in charge that worthy jewel of Christ's passion together with the merits of all saints in heaven, whereby he grants pretended indulgence from penalty and guilt, is a treasurer almost devoid of charity, in that he can set free all that are prisoners in hell at his will. . . .

10. That manslaughter in war, or by pretended law of justice for a temporal cause, without spiritual revelation, is expressly contrary to the New Testament, which indeed is the law of grace and full of mercies. This conclusion is openly proved by the examples of Christ's preaching here on earth, for he especially taught a man to love his enemies, and to show them pity, and not to slay them. The reason is this, that for the most part, when men fight, after the first blow, charity is broken. And whoever dies without charity goes by the straight road to hell. . . .

11. That the vow of continence made in our Church by women, who are frail and imperfect in nature, is the cause of bringing in the gravest and most horrible sins possible to human nature, because, although the killing of abortive children before they are baptized and the destruction of nature by drugs are vile sins, yet connection [sexual contact] with themselves or brute beasts or any creature not having life surpasses them in foulness to such an extent as that they should be punished with the pains of hell. The corollary is that, we would wish that widows and such as take the veil and the ring [as nuns], being delicately fed, were given in marriage, because we cannot excuse them from secret sins.

12. That the abundance of unnecessary arts practiced in our realm nourishes much sin in waste, profusion, and disguise. This, experience and reason prove in some measure, because nature is sufficient for a man's necessity with few arts. . . .

Thus our embassy, which Christ has bidden us to fulfill, is very necessary at this present time for several reasons. And although these matters are briefly noted here they are, however, set forth at large in another book, and many others besides, at length in our own language, and we wish that these were accessible to all Christian people. We ask God then of his supreme goodness to reform our Church, as being entirely out of joint with the perfection of its first beginning.

Questions: What are the Lollards' basic beliefs? What views of human nature and gender are expressed here? What typical practices of the medieval Church are criticized? Why? How did Lollard beliefs threaten the status quo? Why might Lollardy have appealed to urban elites?

87. The Deposition of Richard II

In 1327 Edward II became the first king of England to be deposed; his great-grandson Richard II met a similar fate in 1399, after a determined effort by his cousin Henry of Lancaster (soon to be Henry IV) to force him from the throne. The following account is taken from the parliamentary rolls.

Source: trans. A.R. Myers, *English Historical Documents*, Vol. 4: *1327–1485* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 407–14.

Memorandum that on Monday, the feast of Saint Michael the Archangel [29 September], in the 23rd year of King Richard II, the lords spiritual and temporal and other notable persons [16 names follow] deputed for the following act, came into the presence of the said King Richard, being within the Tower of London, at nine o'clock. And the earl of Northumberland recited before the king on behalf of the aforesaid deputation, how the same king at Conwy in North Wales, being still at liberty, promised to the lord Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury, and to the earl of Northumberland that he was willing to cede and renounce the crown of England and France and his royal majesty, because of the inability and insufficiency to which the same king confessed, and to do this in the best manner and form which could be done as might be best devised by the counsel of experienced men. The king, in the presence of the lords and others named above, benignly replied that he was willing to do what he had formerly promised; he desired, however, to speak with his kinsmen Henry of Lancaster and the archbishop [of Canterbury] before he fulfilled his promise. He asked for a copy of the resignation to be made by him to be given to him, so that he might deliberate upon it. . . . Later on the same day, after dinner, the king greatly desired the arrival of the duke of Lancaster, who tarried for a long time; at last the duke, the lords and persons named above and also the archbishop of Canterbury, came into the king's presence in the Tower, the lords Roos, Willoughby, and Abergavenny and many others being present. And after the king had spoken privately with the duke and the archbishop, looking from one to the other with a cheerful countenance, as it

seemed to the bystanders, at last the king, calling all those present to him, declared publicly in their presence that he was ready to make the renunciation and resignation according to his promise. And although, to save the labor of such a lengthy reading, he might, as he was told, have had the resignation and renunciation, which was drawn up in a certain parchment schedule, read by a deputy, the king willingly, as it seemed, and with a cheerful countenance, holding the same schedule in his hand, said that he would read it himself, and he did read it distinctly. And he absolved his lieges and made renunciation and cession, and swore this . . . and he signed it with his own hand. . . .

And immediately he added to the aforesaid renunciation and cession, in his own words, that if it were in his power the duke of Lancaster should succeed him in the realm. But because this was in no wise in his power, as he said, he asked the archbishop of York and bishop of Hereford, whom he appointed as his proctors to declare and intimate his renunciation and cession to all the estates of the realm, to declare his intention and wish in this matter to the people. And as a token of his intention and wish in this matter, he took from his finger the gold ring with his signet, and put it on the duke's finger, desiring the same, as he affirmed, to be known to all the estates of the realm. And when this was done, all said farewell to him and left the Tower to return to their lodgings.

On the morrow, Tuesday, the feast of Saint Jerome [30 September], in the great hall at Westminster, in the place honorably prepared for holding Parliament, the archbishops of Canterbury and York and the duke of Lancaster, and other dukes, and lords both spiritual and temporal . . . and a great multitude of the people of the realm being gathered there on account of Parliament, the duke of Lancaster occupying his usual and proper place, and the royal throne, solemnly prepared with cloth of gold being vacant, without any president, the archbishop of York and the bishop of Hereford according to the king's injunction publicly declared the cession and renunciation to have been made by him, with the delivery of the seal, and the royal signature, and they caused the cession and renunciation to be read, first in Latin and then in English. And at once the archbishop of Canterbury, to whom it pertains by reason of the dignity and prerogative of the metropolitan church of Canterbury to have the first voice amongst the prelates and magnates of the realm, asked the estate of the people then present, whether they wished to accept the renunciation and cession for their interests and the good of the realm. The estates and people considering, for the reasons specified by the king himself in his renunciation and cession, that it would be very expedient, each one singly, and then in common with the people,

unanimously and cordially gave his consent. After this acceptance it was publicly set forth that besides the cession and renunciation which had been accepted, it would in many ways be expedient and advantageous for the kingdom, to avoid all scruple and evil suspicion, that the many crimes and defects frequently committed by the king in the bad government of the realm—on account of which, as he himself had asserted in his abdication, he deserved to be deposed—should by means of articles which had been drawn up in writing be publicly read, that they might be declared to the people. And so a large part of these articles was then publicly read. The tenor of these articles is as follows . . .

1. In the first place, the king is indicted on account of his evil rule; that is, he has given the goods and possessions which belong to the crown to unworthy persons and otherwise dissipated them indiscreetly, and therefore has imposed collections and other grave and insupportable burdens on his people without cause. And he has perpetrated innumerable other evils. By his assent and command certain prelates and other lords temporal were chosen and assigned by the whole Parliament to govern the realm; and they faithfully labored with their whole strength for the just government of the realm. Nevertheless, the king made a conventicle with his accomplices and proposed to accuse of high treason the lords spiritual and temporal who were occupied for the good of the realm; and in order to strengthen his evil design he violently forced the justices of the realm by fear of death and torture of body to destroy the said lords.

2. Also the king caused the greater part of his justices to come before him and his adherents secretly at Shrewsbury, and he induced, made and compelled them to reply singly to certain questions put to them on behalf of the king, touching the laws of the realm. This was contrary to their wishes, and other than what they would have replied if they had been free and not under compulsion. By color of these replies the king proposed to proceed later to the destruction of the duke of Gloucester, the earls of Arundel and Warwick and other lords, against whom the king was extremely indignant because they wished the king to be under good rule. But with divine help and the resistance and power of the said lords opposing him, the king could not bring his scheme into effect. . . .

7. Also, after many of these people had made fines and redemptions, they sought from the king letters patent of general pardon, concerning the above; but they could secure no advantage from these letters of pardon until they had paid new

fines and redemptions to save their lives; by this they were much impoverished. On account of this the royal name and estate were brought into great disrepute. . . .

10. Also, although the crown of England and the rights of the crown, and the same realm, have been so free for all time past that neither the lord high pontiff nor anyone else outside the kingdom ought to meddle with the same, yet the king, in order to strengthen his erroneous statutes, begged the lord pope to confirm the statutes ordained in the last Parliament. On which the king sought for apostolic letters, in which grave censures were threatened against all who presumed to contravene the statutes in any way. . . .

16. Also, the king refused to keep and defend the just laws and customs of the realm, but according to the whim of his desire he wanted to do whatever appealed to his wishes. Sometimes—and often when the laws of the realm had been declared and expressed to him by the justices and others of his council and he should have done justice to those who sought it according to those laws—he said expressly, with harsh and determined looks, that the laws were in his own mouth, sometimes he said that they were in his breast, and that he alone could change or establish the laws of his realm. And deceived by this idea, he would not allow justice to be done. . . .

17. Also, after certain statutes were established in his Parliament, which should always bind until they should be specially repealed by the authority of another Parliament, the king, desiring to enjoy such liberty that no statutes should bind him, subtly procured that such a petition should be put forward in Parliament on behalf of the community of the realm, and to be granted to him in general, that he might be as free as any of his predecessors were before him. By color of this petition and concession, the king frequently did and ordered many things contrary to such statutes which had never been repealed, acting expressly and knowingly against his oath made at his coronation. . . .

19. Also, although by statute and custom of the realm, upon the summons of Parliament the people of each shire ought to be free to choose and depute knights for the shire to be present in Parliament to set forth their grievances, and sue for remedy as might seem to them expedient; yet the king, so that he might be the more free to carry out in Parliament his rash designs, frequently directed his sheriffs to see that certain persons nominated by himself should come to Parliament as knights of

the shire. The knights thus favorable to him he could induce, as he frequently did, sometimes by fear and various threats, sometimes by gifts, to agree to measures prejudicial to the realm and extremely burdensome to the people. . . .

21. Also, the king, wishing to crush the people under his feet and craftily acquire their goods, that he might have a superabundance of riches, induced the people of seventeen shires to make their submission to the king as traitors, by letters under their seals; by color of which he obtained great sums of money conceded by the clergy and people of the shires, to be taken at the king's pleasure. And although to please the people the king caused those forced letters to be restored to them, yet the king caused the proctors of the people, who had full powers conceded to them to bind themselves and their heirs to the king, to give undertakings to him under their seals in the name of the people. Thus he deceived his people, and craftily extorted their goods from them. . . .

23. Also, in many great councils of the king, when the lords of the realm, the justices, and others were charged faithfully to counsel the king in matters touching the estate of himself and the realm, often suddenly and sharply rebuked and censured the lords, justices and others when they were giving their advice to him according to their discretion, so that they did not dare to speak the truth about the state of the king and the kingdom. . . .

26. Also, although the lands and tenements, goods and chattels of every freeman, according to the laws of the realm used through all past times, ought not to be seized unless they have been lawfully forfeited; nevertheless, the king, proposing and determining to undo such laws, declared and affirmed in the presence of very many lords and others of the community of the realm that the lives of every one of his lieges and their lands, tenements, goods, and chattels are his at his pleasure, without any forfeiture, which is entirely against the laws and customs of the realm. . . .

It seemed to all the estates who were interrogated concerning these matters, both singly and in common, that those accusations of crime and defaults were sufficient and notorious enough for the deposition of the king; and they also considered his confession of inadequacy and other matters contained in the renunciation and cession, publicly announced; whereupon all the estates unanimously agreed that there was abundant reason for proceeding to deposition, for the greater security and tranquility of the realm and the good of the kingdom.

Therefore the estates and communities unanimously and cordially constituted and publicly deputed certain commissioners, that is, the bishop of St. Asaph, the abbot of Glastonbury, the earl of Gloucester, Lord Berkeley, Sir Thomas Erpingham, Sir Thomas Grey, and William Thirnyng, justice, to carry out this sentence of deposition and to depose King Richard from all his royal dignity, majesty, and honor, on behalf of, in the name of, and by authority of all the estates, as has been observed in similar cases by the ancient custom of the realm. . . .

And at once, it being manifest from the foregoing transactions and by reason of them that the realm of England with its appurtenances was vacant, Henry, duke of Lancaster, rising in his place, and standing erect so that he might be seen by the people, and humbly making the sign of the cross on his forehead and his breast, and invoking the name of Christ, claimed the realm of England, vacant as aforesaid, along with the crown and all its members and appurtenances, in his mother tongue in the following words:

> In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I, Henry of Lancaster, challenge this realm of England and the crown with all its members and appurtenances, as I am descended by right line of the blood coming from the good lord, King Henry III, and through that right that God of his grace has sent me, with the help of my kindred and my friends to recover it; the which realm was on the point of being undone for default of governance and undoing of good laws. . . .

When [the archbishop's] sermon was finished, the lord king Henry, in order to set at rest the minds of his subjects, declared publicly in these words:

> Sires, I thank God and you lords spiritual and temporal and all the estates of the land, and let you know that it is not my will that any man should think that by way of conquest I would disinherit any man of his heritage, franchise, or other rights that he ought to have, nor put him out of what he has and has had by the good laws and customs of the realm; except those persons who have been against the good purpose and the common profit of the realm. . . .

On Monday [13 October], the day of Saint Edward, king and confessor, King Henry [IV] was crowned at Westminster, with all fitting solemnity and honor; and certain lords and others did homage to King Henry according to their tenures, in the accustomed manner at the time of such a coronation.

Questions: How do the main characters conduct themselves? How does the king face his deposition? What is the role of Parliament? Are there any hints these events may have been stage-managed? How do the charges against Richard compare with those against Edward II (doc. 76)? Which of these ideas about kingship have been encountered in earlier documents?

Chapter Six

The Fifteenth Century, 1399–1500

Fig. 36. Warfare around a Town. A nineteenth-century copy of a fifteenth-century manuscript illustration showing troops storming a town. Among the weapons depicted are swords, crossbows, longbows, and a small cannon in the foreground. On the left are the tents of the attackers.

88. Chronicle of the Reign of Henry V

Henry V (r. 1413–22), called "Harry" in this vernacular chronicle, revived the Hundred Years' War and won a famous victory at Agincourt in 1415. He followed this up with further military successes and was even designated heir to France by the Treaty of Troyes, but he died before he could enjoy the

fruits of his victory.

Source: ed. J.S. Davies, *An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI* (London: The Camden Society, 1856), pp. 39–52; modernized.

Of King Harry V, the Son of King Harry IV, after the Conquest

After the death of King Harry IV reigned his son, King Harry V, who was born at Monmouth in Wales and crowned at Westminster on Passion Sunday [9 April].

And immediately, the first year of his reign, for the great and tender love that he had for King Richard [II], he translated his body from Langley to Westminster, and buried him beside Queen Anne his first wife, as his desire was. . . .

And this same year were captured certain Lollards and heretics, who had intended through their false treason to slay the king and the lords spiritual and temporal, and destroy all the clergy of the realm. But the king, as God willed, was warned of their false purpose and plan, and fought at Ficketts Field, and with him Master Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, and kept the roads around London secure. And many of them were captured, and drawn and hanged and burned on the gallows in St. Giles's Field. And a knight called Sir Roger of Acton was arrested for Lollardy and for treason, and drawn and hanged and burnt in St. Giles's Field.

The second year of his reign, he held a Parliament at Westminster of all the lords of the realm, who discussed the title that he had to Normandy, Gascony, and Guienne, that were his inheritance, which the king of France withheld wrongfully. And so advised by his council, he sent ambassadors to the king of France and his council, requiring them to surrender his said inheritance to him, or else he would get it by the sword with the help of Jesus. The dauphin of France answered our ambassadors, and said that our king was too young and too tender of age to be a good warrior, and not likely to make such a conquest over them. Our ambassadors, hearing this scornful answer, returned to England again, notifying the king and his council of the answer of the dauphin and of the council of France.

Then the king made ready his ordnance necessary for the war, commanding all men that would go with him to be ready at Southampton, at Lammas [1 August] next following, the third year of his reign. On which day, when the king was ready to take his passage, it was there published and openly known that three lords, that is to say, Sir Richard, earl of Cambridge, brother of the duke of York, Lord Scrope, treasurer of England, and Sir Thomas Grey, knight, had

received a huge sum of money, that is to say, a million gold coins, to betray the king and his brethren to the Frenchmen. For this reason their heads were struck off, outside the north gate at Southampton.

When this was done, the king sailed forth into Normandy with 1,500 ships, and landed [near Harfleur], on [14 August,] the day before the Assumption of our Lady, and from thence he went to Harfleur, and besieged it by land and by water, and commanded [the leader there] to deliver the town, and he said he would not. Wherefore the king commanded his gunners to beat down the walls on every side, and immediately the people of the town sent out to the king asking him for eight days respite in hope of rescue, and if none would come, they would deliver the town: and so they did. And then the king made his uncle, the earl of Dorset, captain of the captured town, and commanded him to drive out all the French people, man, woman, and child, and fill the town with English people.

When this was done, the king went toward Calais by land in order to come to England, but the Frenchmen had broken all the bridges he would pass over, and so he had to seek his way far upstream; he crossed the Somme, and came down into Picardy to a place called Agincourt, where all the power of France was gathered ready to block his way, and gave him battle.

The king, seeing the great multitude and number of people of his enemies, prayed to almighty God for help and succor, and comforted his people, and told every man to ready himself for battle; and he arranged for battle such people as he had, who numbered not quite 8,000, and granted to the duke of York the forward position, as he desired. And then the duke commanded every man to provide himself with a wooden stake sharpened at both ends, so that the stakes might be stuck in the earth slantwise before them, and the Frenchmen should not override them, for that was fully their purpose. And all night before the battle, the Frenchmen made much revel and much crying, and played at dice for our men, an archer for a *blanc* [a small coin of poor silver], as it was said.

On the morrow, when all was ready, the king asked what time of the day it was, and they said, “Prime.” Then said the king, “Now is good time, for all England is praying for us, and therefore be of good cheer, and let us go to our journey.” And right then every English man kneeled down, and put a little portion of earth in his mouth. And then said the king with a loud voice, “In the name of almighty God, and of Saint George, forward banners! And Saint George be your helper this day!” Then the two armies met and fought hard and long, but almighty God and Saint George fought that day for us, and granted our king the victory: and this was on the Friday, [25 October,] the day of Saints Crispin and Crispinian, in the year of our Lord 1415 in a field

called Agincourt in Picardy. And there were slain that day more than 11,000 of the Frenchmen in the field of Agincourt: and there were 120,000 of them in the field.

Then came tidings to our king, that there was another host of Frenchmen ordained ready to fight against him; and immediately he commanded every man to slay his prisoner, and when they saw that, they withdrew and went their way.

And there were slain in the field on the French side the duke of Berry, the duke of Alençon, the duke of Brabant, the earl of Narbonne, the chief constable of France, eight other earls, the archbishop of Sens, more than 100 barons, and 1,500 other worthy knights and men in coat-armor. And on the English side there died that day, the duke of York, the earl of Suffolk, and not more than twenty-six others.

And there were taken prisoners on the French side the duke of Orléans, the duke of Bourbon, the earl of Vendôme, the earl of Eu, the earl of Richmond, Sir Bursigaund, marshal of France, and other worthy men. And after this, the king came to Calais, and so to England, with all his prisoners, and was received with much joy and worship. . . .

How King Harry Went the Second Time into Normandy, and of the Capture of Calais, and the Siege of Rouen

The fifth year of his reign, he made ready his ordnance and his retinue to sail to Normandy again, and commanded all men that would go with him to be ready at Southampton, in the Whitsuntide next following [around 30 May]. And then he made John his brother, the duke of Bedford, lieutenant of England; and then he sailed to Normandy with a notable force and great ordnance, and landed at Touques on Lammas Day [1 August]; and there he made forty-eight knights, at his landing.

Then came tidings to the king that there was a great navy of enemies upon the sea, that is to say, nine great carracks, hulks, galleys, and other ships to destroy his navy: and immediately he sent the earl of March with a sufficient force to keep the sea, and he captured many of the said ships, and put the remnant to flight; and some were sunk in a tempest. And one of the carracks was driven ashore near Southampton, and its mast was thrown over the town walls; this was on Saint Bartholomew's day [24 August].

Then the king sent to the captain of Touques, commanding him to deliver the town, and so he did. And the king made Sir John Kiley captain of it, and commanded him to put out all the French people. . . .

And then the king went his way to Caen and besieged it on every side, and sent word to the captain to deliver it, but he would not, and so they assaulted the town; and the duke of Clarence beat down the walls with guns on his side, and first entered into the town, and cried, "À Clarence! à Clarence! à Saint George!" and so the town was captured. And the king entered and commanded the captain of the castle to deliver it to him; and he asked for fourteen days' respite in hope of rescue, and if none came, [he promised] to deliver the castle to him. And under this agreement were included the town and castle of Baons with other towns, fortresses, and villages, to the number of fourteen. And at the end of fourteen days came no rescue, wherefore the castle of Caen and the other fourteen towns were delivered to the king; and he made the duke of Clarence captain of the towns of Caen and Baons and the other towns also; and there the king held Saint George's feast [on 23 April] and made fifteen knights of the Bath. . . .

And at this same time came the duke of Brittany unto King Harry and became his man.

And the king sent Humphrey his brother, duke of Gloucester, to Cherbourg, and Richard, earl of Warwick, to Domfront, which towns were surrendered to them soon afterward.

In the meantime, the earl of March, whom the king had sent to keep the sea, after many storms and great tempests landed at La Hague in Normandy, and so went forth to the king.

Then the king took Argentan, Cessy, Alençon, Bellême, Verneuil in Perche, and all the towns and castles and strongholds up to Pont de l'Arche, and from there went to the city of Rouen.

And this same year, Sir John Oldcastle, knight, Lord Cobham, was arrested for Lollardy, and put into the Tower of London, and right afterward he escaped and fled into Wales and stayed there a long time, and at last Lord Powys captured him, but he made a great defense and was badly wounded before he could be taken; and then he was brought in a horse-drawn litter to Westminster, where he was sentenced to be drawn to St. Giles's Field, and there he was hanged and burned on the gallows for his false opinions.

The sixth year of King Harry, the king sent his uncle Sir Thomas Beaufort to the gates of Rouen, and there he displayed the king's banner, and sent heralds to the town and bade them yield it to the king of England, and they said shortly that they would not. And then the said Beaufort collected good information about the ground all around, and returned to the king at Pont de l'Arche; and immediately after, the people of Rouen cast down their suburbs that stood around the city, so that the king should have no succor there.

And the Sunday before Lammas Day [1 August] then next

following, the king with his host besieged the city of Rouen round about, and stretched over the water of the Seine, at Pont de l'Arche, a strong and a mighty chain of iron, and put it through great piles of wood driven deep into the ground, so that no vessel might pass that way; and above that chain the king had a bridge built over the river Seine so that men and horses and carriages might pass to and fro as needed.

Then came the earl of Warwick from Domfront, and the king sent him to Caudebec, and the townspeople came out and negotiated with the earl to be under agreement to do as Rouen did; and it was granted on this condition, that the king's navy with his ordnance might pass upstream safely without any hindrance or disturbance; and to this agreement they set their seals. And then 100 ships came up and cast their anchors there, and then Rouen was besieged by both water and by land. . . .

Then came tidings that the king of France, the dauphin, the duke of Burgundy, and all the power of France would come down to rescue the city of Rouen, and break the siege; but they did not come.

And at the first coming of the king to Rouen, there were numbered in the city, by heralds, 300,000 men, women, and children; and this siege endured twenty weeks; and for this whole time the townspeople hoped to be rescued, but it would not be: and many hundreds died of hunger, for they had eaten all their cats, horses, hounds, rats, mice, and all that might be eaten; and often the men of arms drove the poor people out of the gates of the city to buy victuals, and right away our men drove them in again; and young children lay dead in the streets, hanging on their dead mothers' breasts, which was piteous to see. And when the captain of the town saw this great mischief and hunger, he sent to the king, beseeching him of his mercy and grace, and brought the keys, and delivered the town to him, and all the soldiers left the town with their horses and harness, and the commons of the town remained, paying 20,000 marks yearly to the king. . . .

Then the dauphin's ambassadors, as it was before agreed, with full power to do all things as if he were there himself, came to the king at Rouen; and after much negotiation, it was agreed that on a certain set day the dauphin should come to the town of Dreux, and King Harry to Avranches; and there they would agree upon a meeting place where they might peaceably negotiate the peace. . . . At the appointed day the king came, but the dauphin came not, and so the peace was broken at that time. . . .

And after many wise negotiations on both sides, peace was concluded by the affinity and wedlock of King Harry and Dame Katherine, King Charles's daughter. But because certain things were

necessary for which the presence of both kings was required, for the setting of their seals, and for the making of the marriage, and also because Charles was so enfeebled with age and often vexed with his usual sickness, it was thus agreed between them, that King Harry should come at a day specified, under truce, with such forces as he liked, to Nogent upon the Seine, to finally perform all things that were needful to the peace, and if he did not come, all things should be null and void. . . .

And after many and diverse negotiations, [on 26 July,] the seventh of the kalends of June, the fortieth year of King Charles's reign, in the cathedral church of Nogent, King Harry with the duke of Clarence his brother and other princes and nobles, and Queen Isabelle of France with the duke of Burgundy, being there for King Charles, who was then laboring in his aforementioned sickness, and in their own names also, and the three estates of France, peace was made between the two realms of England and of France, and approved with certain conditions. And King Charles charged all his liegemen on pain of forfeiture of their allegiances to keep the said peace; and they took an oath to do so, and pledged their faith to King Harry. And then Queen Isabelle of France, and Philip, duke of Burgundy, swore upon the holy Gospels in the name of King Charles to keep the said peace so concluded for them and for their heirs and successors without fraud and ill will forever; and Queen Isabelle, and the duke of Burgundy, and the three estates of France made this same oath to King Harry, to his heirs and successors. And on [28 July,] the ninth of the kalends of June, before Queen Isabelle and King Charles's council, before the Parliament and the three estates of France, and other English princes and lords, contract of matrimony by present words was there made and solemnized between King Harry and Dame Katherine, King Charles of France's daughter. . . .

And the next January King Harry and Queen Katherine went to England, and left at Paris Thomas duke of Exeter, governor, and Thomas his brother, duke of Clarence, regent of Normandy; and the duke of Clarence was slain there with the Scots on Easter eve, while the king was in England. And on Sunday the [twenty-third] day of February, in the eighth year of King Harry, Dame Katherine was crowned at Westminster.

At the following midsummer, the king left the queen in England, and went again to France, and took certain garrisons that were in rebellion, and besieged the town of Meaux, at which siege tidings came to the king that the queen was delivered [of a child]; and after her purification she went again to France.

When Meaux was yielded, King Harry went to Paris, making plans to besiege the town of Cosne; and then a sore and burning malady assailed him, and from day to day grievously vexed him, till he died in the castle of Vincennes, the last day of August, when he had reigned nine years, five months, three weeks, and three days, and he is buried at Westminster: on whose soul almighty God have mercy. Amen.

Questions: What English domestic matters are of interest to the chronicler? How did Henry and his commanders conduct warfare in France? Are there similarities between Crécy (doc. 78) and Agincourt? What was the significance of Henry's marriage to Katherine?

89. Statutes of the Order of the Garter

Founded by King Edward III in ca 1348, in the flush of the first English victories during the Hundred Years' War, the Order of the Garter promoted chivalry and more closely bound English elites to the king, who personally oversaw the order's elaborate rituals and bestowed its honors. Henry V revised the order's practices and produced its earliest written statutes, excerpted below.

Source: trans. K.A. Smith from "MS Arundel 48 and the Earliest Statutes of the Order of the Garter," ed. L. Jefferson, *English Historical Review* 109, no. 431 (April 1994): 376–83.

To the honor of God, the Glorious Virgin Mary, and Saint George, after the lord king of England Edward (III) commanded the conquest of English lands [in France] to be carried out in the twenty-third year of his reign, he established an order in his castle at Windsor, in the following manner.

1. The founding members were: firstly, the sovereign himself; his eldest son, the prince of Wales; the earl of Lancaster; the earl of Warwick; the captal de Buch; the earl of Stafford; the earl of Salisbury; the lord de Mortimer; John, lord Lisle; Bartholomew, lord Burghesh; Lord John de Beauchamp; the lord of Mohun; Sir Hugh de Courtenay; Sir Thomas Holland; Sir John de Grey; Sir Richard Fitz-Simon; Sir Miles Stapleton; Sir Thomas Wale; Sir Hugh Wrottesley; Sir Nele Loring; Sir John Chandos; Sir James Audley; Sir Otho Holand; Sir Henry Ream; Sir Sanchet d'Abrichecourte; and Sir Walter Paveley.
2. The king and his royal heirs are to be the masters of the order in perpetuity.

3. No one may be admitted to the order as a companion unless he is of noble birth as well as a knight without reproach.

4. The twenty-six founders named above [and their successors] will wear the mantles and garters of the order when they visit Windsor Castle, whenever they enter the Chapel of Saint George or the chapter house [at Windsor] to hold a chapter meeting or conduct any other business pertaining to the order. Likewise, they will wear their mantles on the vigil of Saint George when they accompany the king or his representative in procession from the great chamber to the chapel, and when they return from the chapel in the same manner. And they will also wear them at supper on the vigil, during the meal and until the end of the celebrations. . . .

10. Each year on the vigil of Saint George all of the companions of Saint George who are within the realm, as well as those who are outside it, if they can, will gather at Windsor Castle to attend the offices of the holy Church. During the offices they will take their places in their stalls wearing their mantles, each with his helmet and sword displayed above his stall. These will remain in place in the chapel as long as these members live, as a reminder of those who bore them in defence of the holy Church, as the order of chivalry demands. . . .

12. All of the companions belonging to the order must wear their blue mantels from the hour of first vespers [on the vigil of Saint George] until after second vespers on the feast of Saint George each year, wherever they may be, just as if they were present at the feast with the king or his representative. . . .

13. If any member of the order appears in public without his garter, after first being challenged he will be fined half a mark, to be paid to the guardian and the college. . . .

17. If any member of the order passes near Windsor Castle while he is traveling, he must stop there to honor that place unless he is prevented from doing so for some good reason. And he will put on his mantle before entering the Chapel of Saint George, since none who is not wearing such a mantle may enter there. And the canons who reside there will meet him and devoutly admit him to the chapel. And if he arrives at the hour of mass, he should attend mass there in honor of God and Saint George. . . .

18. As soon as the death of a member of the order is known, the king will order one thousand masses to be sung for his soul; a foreign king [belonging to the order] eight hundred; the prince

of Wales seven hundred; each duke six hundred; each earl three hundred; each knight banneret two hundred; and each knight bachelor one hundred. . . .

20. When any knight of the order dies and another is elected, after his election his garter and mantle will be delivered to him in all haste for him to wear when he first enters his stall. And if he dies before he can receive his habit, he will not be named among the founders, since he died lacking his full rank, but he will receive half of the masses [as would a full member] as designated in the book of the garter, and no more. And if a newly elected member does not come in all good haste after his election to Windsor to be formally installed within a year of his election, and if he is within the realm, if the king or his representative and the company do not find his excuse acceptable, his election will be rendered void. . . .

24. After any of the order's first founders dies, his shield, arms, and helmet are to be affixed to the back of his stall; and other members who come afterward will have their shields and helmets hung up in the same manner, below those of the original founders, but their shields and helmets will not be as great as those of the founders. . . .

30. None of the knights of Saint George of the Order of the Garter will leave the realm without the knowledge and permission of the king. And for this reason it is agreed that if the king is planning any expedition or any undertaking pertaining to the honor of chivalry, he should give preference of place to the companions above all others.

31. No member of the order may take up arms against another member, unless in a war ordered by his sovereign lord or in a right and just dispute. . . .

Questions: What values did the order promote? Why would membership have been so appealing? In what ways do the statutes underscore the crown's power and prestige? How might the king domesticate the knightly class through such a chivalric society?

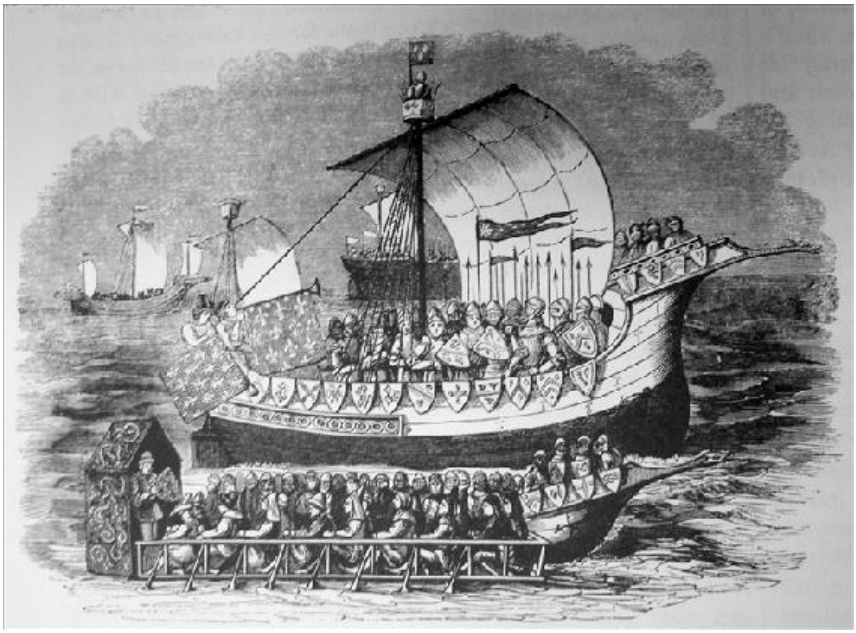

Fig. 37. Warships. A nineteenth-century engraving of English warships, copied from a fifteenth-century manuscript. Similar ships would have been used to transport English soldiers during the Agincourt campaign (doc. 90) and to carry the Cely family's wool from England to Calais (doc. 97).

90. Financing the Agincourt Campaign

While the cult of chivalry continued to thrive in fifteenth-century England, the raising of armies required the consideration of more pragmatic matters. In preparation for his 1415 invasion of Normandy, Henry V petitioned Parliament to levy new taxes, took out loans from towns, and pawned royal jewels and plate to captains who pledged to raise troops. The first document is typical of the indentures made between the crown and these captains, and demonstrates how much the business of war changed in the later Middle Ages, as knight service based on land tenure gave way to armies composed largely of mercenaries. Although the 1415 campaign was profitable for Sir Thomas Tunstall, who received the French town of Ponthever as a reward, many of the some 10,000 Englishmen who fought died in France or returned home with their wages in arrears. As the second text shows, some saw the accession of Henry VI as an opportunity to remind the crown of old debts.

Source: trans. N.H. Nicolas, *The History of the Battle of Agincourt; and of the Expedition of Henry the Fifth into France* (London: J.

Johnson, 1827), pp. xxxii–xxxiv, cccciii–cccciv; revised.

Indenture between King Henry V and Sir Thomas Tunstall, 1415

This indenture is made between the king our sovereign lord, on the one part, and Sir Thomas Tunstall, on the other part. Witness that the said Thomas is bound to our lord the king, to serve him for a whole year in a voyage which the same lord the king will personally make, if it pleases God, to either his duchy of Guyenne or his kingdom of France, commencing in the said year, the day of the muster of the army, at a place to be chosen by the said lord the king, next May, provided that he is ready to muster his troops then.

Thomas will bring with him on the voyage for the whole year six men-at-arms, including himself, and eighteen horse archers, Thomas taking wages for himself at 2s. per day. If Thomas goes to the duchy of Guyenne with our lord the king, he will have for each of the said men-at-arms 40 marks in wages, and for each of the said archers 20 marks in wages, for the year. If Thomas goes with our lord the king to the kingdom of France, he will take for the wages of the men-at-arms 12d., and for each of the archers 6d. per day during that year. And in case of the said voyage to France, Thomas will have the usual reward for himself and his men-at-arms, at the rate of 100 marks for thirty men-at-arms per quarter.

If Thomas accompanies the king to Guyenne, he will receive half of his reward in the first quarter, and the other half when he has mustered his men to go to Guyenne. And in case after the muster our king decides not to go to his duchy of Guyenne but instead to France, then Thomas will be paid what is owed to him for the first quarter, besides the sum received by him as above, for the wages and reward, as well for himself as for the men-at-arms and archers who accompany him to France. And as surety of payment for the second quarter, on the first day of next June our king will have delivered to Thomas jewels, in pledge, valued at a sum equal to the said wages, or wages with reward, due for that quarter. Thomas will be bound to return these jewels to the king, if the king redeems them within a year and a half and one month; if he does not, it will be lawful for Thomas, or anyone else to whom he delivers the jewels, to dispose of them at their pleasure. . . . And for the third quarter, Thomas will be paid for himself and his retinue within six months after the commencement of that quarter, according to the quantity of wages, or wages with reward, for the country to which they have gone, or will go, during that quarter. And respecting the payment of the wages, or wages with reward, for the last quarter of the year, if for half of the said third

quarter the king will not give such security for the payment to the said Thomas as he reasonably demands, then at the expiration of the third quarter Thomas will be acquitted and discharged from the service of the king. . . .

And the said Thomas will be bound to be ready at the sea, with his retinue well mounted, armed, and equipped, suitably to their condition, for his muster on the first day of next July; and from the time of their arrival at the specified place, the said Thomas will muster his people before such person or persons as it may please the king to assign, as often as he will reasonably require. And as usual the king will provide for Thomas and his retinue, as well as their horses, harness, and provisions to be transported across the sea, and likewise returned to England, in the manner of others of his condition. And if the king countermands Thomas before his passage overseas, he will still be bound to serve the king for the same sum, in such parts as will please him to go, with the said men-at-arms and archers, according to the rate of wages that is customary in the parts where the king will send them, with the exception of any that may die in the meantime. And if Thomas or any of his retinue capture the "Adversary of France" [King Charles VI of France, whom Henry V regarded as a usurper] or any of his sons, nephews, uncles, cousins-german or any king of that kingdom, or lieutenant, or other chieftains having command from the 'Adversary' in the course of the campaign, he will turn over the 'Adversary' or other prisoner of the rank specified above to the king, who will make reasonable restitution to Thomas. And respecting other profits to be had from the spoils of war, the king will have as well the third part of Thomas's spoils, as well as a third of the third part of the profits taken by the people of his retinue in the course of the campaign, as well as any profits derived from prisoners, booty, money, all gold, silver, and jewels, exceeding the value of 10 marks.

In witness of which things on the part of this indenture relating to the king, Thomas has put his seal. Done at Westminster, 29 April [1415], the year of the reign of our said lord king the third.

Petition of Thomas Strickland, 1424

To the king our sovereign lord, and to the lords of his council, the most humble supplication of a poor esquire, Thomas de Strickland, late bearer of the banner of Saint George, of the most noble Henry the fifth, may God bless him. May it please your good grace to consider the long service which the said suppliant rendered to the late king in parts beyond the sea, from the time of his arrival at Harfleur, and the battle of Agincourt, and since, up to the time when the city of Rouen

was taken. And the said suppliant has as yet received no reward for his services on the day of that battle, nor any payment for his wages excepting for half a year, so that at present he is in arrears in his account in the Exchequer in the sum of £14 4s. 10d. for certain broken vessels of silver by him put in pledge by the said late king, the which vessels the said suppliant has sold and has spent the money in the service of the late king. And therefore may it please you in reverence of God, and for the soul of the same king to grant to the suppliant the £14 4s. 10d. in reward of his service, and in partial payment of the wages due to him by the late king, and to grant a sufficient warrant accordingly to the treasurer and barons of the Exchequer toward the king of the £14 4s. 10d., for the sake of God, and as an act of charity.

Questions: What does the first document reveal about military financing? What did men like Sir Thomas Tunstall stand to gain from fighting in France? How well did the crown fulfill its promises? Why might Strickland have waited so long to make his claim?

91. Order of the Pageants of the York Corpus Christi Play

The roots of modern English drama lie in the religious plays of the late Middle Ages, one form of which was the series of short scenes presented on a parade of wagons with which the city of York celebrated Corpus Christi day, a festival in honor of the body of Christ. The city's craft guilds produced these plays. The following list of guild-sponsored wagons from the 1415 pageant tells us about both the organization of the pageant and the economic life of this northern city.

Source: trans. L.T. Smith, "York Plays," repr. in *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, ed. Edward P. Cheyney, 1st ser. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Department of History, 1894), vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 29–32; revised.

Tanners—God the Father Omnipotent creating and forming the heavens, the angels and archangels, Lucifer and the angels who fell with him into the pit.

Plasterers—God the Father in his substance creating the earth and all things which are therein, in the space of five days.

Wool Cardmakers—God the Father forming Adam from the mud of the earth, and making Eve from Adam's rib, and inspiring them with the breath of life.

Fullers—God forbidding Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of life.

Coopers—Adam and Eve and the tree between them, the serpent deceiving them with apples; God speaking to them and cursing the

serpent, and an angel with a sword driving them out of Paradise.

Armorers—Adam and Eve, an angel with a spade and distaff appointing them their labor.

Glovers—Able and Cain sacrificing victims.

Shipwrights—God warning Noah to make an ark out of planed wood.

Fishmongers and Mariners—Noah in the ark with his wife, three sons of Noah with their wives, with various animals.

Parchment-makers and Book-binders—Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac on the altar.

Hosiers—Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness, King Pharaoh, eight Jews looking on and wondering.

Spicers—A learned man declaring the sayings of the prophets concerning the future birth of Christ. Mary, the angel saluting her; Mary saluting Elizabeth.

Pewterers and Founders—Mary, Joseph wishing to send her away, the angel telling them to go over to Bethlehem.

Tilers—Mary, Joseph, a nurse, the child born and lying in a manger between an ox and an ass, and an angel speaking to the shepherds, and to the players in the next pageant.

Chandlers—Shepherds speaking to one another, the star in the East, an angel announcing to the shepherds their great joy in the child which has been born.

Goldsmiths, Goldbeaters and Moneyers—Three kings coming from the East, Herod questioning them about the child Jesus, and the son of Herod and two counsellors and a herald. Mary with the child and the star above, and three kings offering gifts.

. . . Masons—Mary, with the boy, Joseph, Anna; the nurse, with the young doves. Simeon receiving the boy into his arms, and the two sons of Simeon.

Farriers—Mary with the boy and Joseph fleeing into Egypt, at the bidding of the angel.

Girdlers, Nailers, and Sawyers—Herod ordering the male children to be slain, four soldiers with lances, two counsellors of the king, and four women weeping for the death of their sons.

Spurriers and Bit-makers—Learned men, the boy Jesus sitting in the temple in the midst of them, asking them questions and replying to them, four Jews, Mary and Joseph seeking him, and finding him in the temple.

Barbers—Jesus, John the Baptist baptizing him, and two angels

attending.

Vintners—Jesus, Mary, bridegroom with the bride, ruler of the wedding feast [at Cana] with his slaves, with six vessels of water in which the water is turned into wine.

Smiths—Jesus on a pinnacle of the temple, and the devil tempting him with stones, and two angels attending, etc.

Leather Curriers—Peter, James, and John; Jesus ascending a mountain and transfiguring himself before them. Moses and Elias appearing, and the voice of one speaking in a cloud.

Ironmongers—Jesus, and Simon the leper asking Jesus to eat with him; two disciples, Mary Magdalene bathing Jesus's feet with her tears and drying them with her hair.

Plumbers and Pattenmakers—Jesus, two apostles, the woman taken in adultery, four Jews accusing her.

Pouchmakers, Leather Bottle-makers, and Capmakers—Lazarus in the sepulcher, Mary Magdalene and Martha, and two Jews wondering.

Skinners and Vestmakers—Jesus on an ass with its colt, twelve apostles following Jesus, six rich and six poor, eight boys with branches of palm, singing Blessed, etc., and Zaccheus climbing into a sycamore tree.

Cutlers, Bladesmiths, Sheathers, Scalers, Bucklermakers, and Horners—Pilate, Caiaphas, two soldiers, three Jews, Judas selling Jesus.

Bakers—The Passover lamb, the Lord's Supper, twelve apostles, Jesus girded with a towel washing their feet, institution of the sacrament of the body of Christ in the new law, communion of the apostles.

Cordwainers—Pilate, Caiaphas, Annas, fourteen armed soldiers, Malchus, Peter, James, John, Jesus, and Judas kissing and betraying him.

Bow-makers and Arrow-makers—Jesus, Annas, Caiaphas, and four Jews beating and scourging Jesus. Peter, the woman accusing Peter, and Malchus.

Tapestry-makers and Couchers—Jesus, Pilate, Annas, Caiaphas, two counsellors and four Jews accusing Jesus.

Bed-makers—Herod, two counsellors, four soldiers, Jesus, and three Jews.

Cooks and Water-carriers—Pilate, Annas, Caiaphas, two Jews, and Judas bringing back to them the thirty pieces of silver.

Tilemakers, Millers, Furriers, Horsehair-workers, Bowl-makers—Jesus, Pilate, Caiaphas, Annas, six soldiers holding spears with

banners and four others leading Jesus away from Herod, asking to have Barabbas released and Jesus crucified, and likewise binding and scourging him, and placing the crown of thorns upon his head; three soldiers casting lots for the clothing of Jesus.

Shearmen—Jesus, stained with blood, bearing the cross to Calvary. Simon of Cyrene, the Jews compelling him to carry the cross; Mary the mother of Jesus; John the apostle then announcing the condemnation and passage of her son to Calvary. Veronica wiping the blood and sweat from the face of Jesus with a veil on which is imprinted the face of Jesus, and other women mourning for Jesus.

Pinmakers, Latenmakers, and Painters—The cross, Jesus stretched upon it on the ground; four Jews scourging him and binding him with ropes, and afterward lifting the cross, and the body of Jesus nailed to the cross on Mount Calvary.

Butchers and Poultry Dealers—The cross, two thieves crucified, Jesus hanging on the cross between them, Mary the mother of Jesus, John, Mary, James, and Salome. A soldier with a lance, a servant with a sponge, Pilate, Annas, Caiaphas, the centurion, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, placing him in the sepulcher.

Saddlers, Glaziers and Joiners—Jesus conquering hell; twelve spirits, six good, and six evil.

Carpenters—Jesus rising from the sepulcher, four armed soldiers, and the three Marys mourning. Pilate, Caiaphas, and Annas. A young man seated at the sepulcher clothed in white, speaking to the women.

Winedrawers—Jesus, Mary Magdalene with aromatic spices.

Brokers and Woolpackers—Jesus, Luke, and Cleophas in the guise of travelers.

Scriveners, Illuminators, Pardoners and Cloth-furbishers—Jesus, Peter, John, James, Philip, and the other apostles with parts of a baked fish, and a honeycomb; and Thomas the apostle touching the wounds of Jesus.

Tailors—Mary, John the evangelist, the eleven apostles, two angels, Jesus ascending before them, and four angels carrying a cloud.

Potters—Mary, two angels, eleven apostles, and the Holy Spirit descending upon them, and four Jews wondering.

Drapers—Jesus, Mary, Gabriel with two angels, two virgins and three Jews of Mary's acquaintance, eight apostles, and two devils.

Linen-weavers—Four apostles carrying the bier of Mary, and Fergus hanging above the bier, with two other Jews and an angel.

Woolen-weavers—Mary ascending with a throng of angels, eight apostles, and the apostle Thomas preaching in the desert.

Innkeepers—Mary, Jesus crowning her, with a throng of angels singing.

Mercers—Jesus, Mary, the twelve apostles, four angels with trumpets, and four with a crown, a lance, and two whips, four good spirits, and four evil spirits, and six devils.

Questions: What are the religious emphases of the pageant? Where does its story begin and end? What kinds of goods were manufactured in York? Is there any indication of which guilds were larger or richer? Can the content of certain scenes be associated with the work of the sponsoring guilds?

92. Poems about Raising Children

"How the Goodwife Taught Her Daughter" and the parallel text "How the Wise Man Taught His Son" circulated widely (often as companion pieces) in the fifteenth century, when such instructional texts were very popular. The authors of these texts are unknown. Both texts were likely aimed at an audience of young men and women from the urban middle classes.

Source: ed. Edith Rickert, *The Babee's Book: Medieval Manners for the Young* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908, 1923), pp. 31–42, 43–47; modernized.

How the Goodwife Taught Her Daughter

The good wife taught her daughter,
Full many a time and oft,
A full good woman to be;
For said she: "Daughter to me dear,
Something good now must thou hear,
If thou wilt prosper thee.

Daughter, if thou wilt be a wife,
Look wisely that thou work;
Look lovely and in good life,
Love God and Holy Kirk.
Go to church whene'er thou may,
Look thou not miss it for rain,
For best thou farest on that day;
To commune with God be fain.
He must needs well thrive,

That liveth well all his life,
My dear child.
Gladly give thy tithes and thy
offerings both,
To the poor and bed-ridden—look
thou be not loth.
Give of thine own goods and be not
too hard,
For seldom is the house poor where
God is steward.
Well is he proved
Who the poor hath loved,
My dear child.

When thou sittest in the church, o'er
thy beads bend;
Make thou no jangling with gossip
or with friend.
Laugh thou to scorn neither old
body nor young,
But be of fair bearing and of good
tongue.
Through thy fair bearing
Thy worship hath increasing,
My dear child.

If any man offer thee courtship, and
would marry thee,
Look that thou scorn him not,
whatsoever he be;
But show it to thy friends and
conceal it naught.
Sit not by him nor stand where sin
might be wrought,
For a slander raised of ill

Is difficult to still,
My dear child.

The man that shall thee wed before
God with a ring,
Love thou him and honor most of
earthly thing.
Meekly thou him answer and not as
a shrewish being,

So may'st thou slake his mood and
be his dear darling.
A fair word and a meek
Doth anger slake,
My dear child. . . .

And when thou goest on thy way, go
thou not too fast,
Brandish not with thy head, nor
with thy shoulders cast,
Have not too many words, from
swearing keep aloof,
For all such manners come to an evil
proof.
For he that catcheth to him an evil
name,
It is to him a foul fame,
My dear child.

Go thou not into the town, as it
were, agaze.
From one house to another, for to
seek the maze;
Nor to sell thy cloth, to the market
shalt thou go,
And then to the tavern to bring thy
credit low.
For they that taverns haunt
From thrift soon come to want,
My dear child.

And if thou be in any place where
good ale is aloft,
Whether that thou serve thereof or
that thou sit soft,
Moderately take thou thereof, that
thou fall in no blame,
For if thou be often drunk, it falleth
to thy shame.
For those that be often drunk—
Thrift is from them sunk,
My dear child.

Go not to the wrestling or shooting
at the cock,

As it were a strumpet or a giggle-a-
lot,
Dwell at home, daughter, and love
thy work much,
And so thou shalt, my dear child,
wax the sooner rich.
A merry thing 'tis evermore,
A man to be served from his own
store,
My dear child.

Acquaint thee not with each man
that goeth by the street,
Though any man speak to thee,
briefly thou him greet;
By him do not stand, but let him his
way depart,
Lest he by his villainy should tempt
thy heart.
For all men be not true
That fair words can show,
My dear child. . . .

And wisely govern thy house, and
serving maids and men,
Be thou not too bitter or too easy
with them;
But look well what most needs to be
done,
And set thy people at it, both
quickly and soon.
For ready is at need
A foredone deed,
My dear child. . . .

Whate'er thy household doth, about
them must thou wend,
And as much as thou mayest, be at
that one end,
If thou find any fault, make them
soon amend,
As they have time and space, and
may them defend.
To compel a deed be done, if there

be no space,
It is but tyranny, without
temperance and grace,
My dear child.

And look that all things be well
when they their work forsake,
Forget thou not the keys into thy
ward to take
And beware of whom thou trustest,
and for no fancy spare,
For much harm hath fallen to them
that not beware.
But, daughter, look thou be wise,
and do as I thee teach,
And trust none better than thyself,
for no fair speech,
My dear child.

And give your household their hire
at their pay-day,
Whether they dwell still with thee,
or they wend away.
Do well by them of the goods thou
hast in hold,
And then shall they say well of thee,
both the young and old.
Thy good name to thy friends
Great joy and gladness lends,
My dear child.

And if thy neighbor's wife hath on
rich attire,
Therefore mock not, nor let scorn
burn thee as a fire.

But thank thou God in heaven for
what he may thee give,
And so shalt thou, my daughter
dear, a good life live,
He hath ease in his power,
Who thanks the Lord every hour,
My dear child.

Housewifely thou shalt go on the

working day,
For pride, rest, and idleness take
thrift away;
But when the holy day is come, well
clothed shalt thou be,
The holy day to honor, and God will
cherish thee.
Have in mind to worship God
always
For much pride comes of the evil
day,
My dear child.

When thou art a wife, a neighbor for
to be,
Love then well thy neighbors as God
hath commanded thee.
It behoveth thee so for to do,
And to do to them as thou wouldst
be done to.
If any discord happen, night or day,
Make it no worse, mend it if thou
may,
My dear child.

And if thou art a rich wife, be not
then too hard,
But welcome fair thy neighbors that
come thee toward
With meat, drink, and honest cheer,
such as thou mayest bid.
To each man after his degree, and
help the poor at need.
And also for hap that may betide,
Please well thy neighbors that dwell
thee beside,
My dear child. . . .

And if thy children be rebels and
will not bow them low,
If any of them misdo, neither curse
them nor blow;
But take a smart rod and beat them
in a row,
Till they cry mercy and their guilt

well know.
Dear child, by this lore
They will love thee ever more,
My dear child.

And look to thy daughters that none
of them be lorn;
From the very time that they are of
thee born,
Busy thyself and gather fast for their
marriage,

And give them to spousing, as soon
as they be of age.
Maidens be fair and amiable,
But in their love full unstable,
My dear child.

Now have I taught thee, daughter,
as my mother did me;
Think thereon night and day, that
forgotten it not be.
Have measure and lowness, as I
have thee taught,
Then whatever man shall wed thee
will regret it naught.
Better you were a child unbore
Than untaught in this wise lore,
My dear child. . . .

The blessing of God may'st thou
have, and of his mother bright,
Of all angels and archangels and
every holy wight!
And may'st thou have grace to wend
thy way full right,
To the bliss of heaven, where God
sits in his might!
Amen.

How the Wise Man Taught His Son

Listen, lordlings, and ye shall hear
how the wise man taught his

son.
Take good heed to this matter and
learn it if ye can,
For this song was made with good
intent to make men true and
steadfast,
And a thing well begun makes often
a good ending.

There was a wise man taught his son
While he was yet a child of tender
years, meek and fair to look
upon,
Very eager for learning and with a
great desire to all goodness;
And his father taught him well and
featly by good example and fair
words.

He said: My son, take good heed
every morning,
Ere ye do a worldly thing, lift up
your heart to God,
And pray as devoutly as you can for
grace to lead a good life,
And to escape sin both night and
day,
And that heaven's bliss may be your
meed.

And, my son, wherever you go, be
not full of tales;
Beware what you say, for your own
tongue may be your foe.

If you say aught, take good heed
where and to whom,
For a word spoken today may be
repented seven years after.

And, son, whatever manner of man
ye be, give yourself not to
idleness,
But busy yourself every day
according to your estate.

Beware of rest and ease, which
things nourish sloth.
Ever to be busy, more or less, is a
full good sign of honesty.

And, son, I warn you also not to
desire to bear office,
For then you must either displease
and hurt your neighbors,
Or else forswear yourself and not do
as your office demands;
And get yourself, here and there, a
hundredfold more than thanks. .
. .

And, son, of another thing I warn
you, on my blessing
Take good heed of tavern-haunting,
and of the dice, and flee all
lechery,
Lest you come to an evil end, for it
will lead astray all your wits
And bring you into great mischief.

And, son, sit not up too long at
even, or have late suppers,
Though ye be strong and hale, for
with such outrage your health
shall worsen.
And of late walking comes debate,
and of sitting and drinking out of
time,
Therefore beware and go to bed
betimes and wink.

And, son, if ye would have a wife,
take her not for her money,
But inquire wisely of all her life, and
give good heed
That she be meek, courteous, and
prudent, even though she be
poor;
And such a one will do you more
good service in time of need,
than a richer. . . .

And if your wife be meek and good,
and serve you well and
pleasantly,
Look ye be not so mad as to charge
her too grievously,
But rule her with a fair hand and
easy, and cherish her for her
good deeds. . . .

And ye shall not displease your wife,
nor call her by villainous names,

For it is a shame to you to miscall a
woman; and in so doing, ye are
not wise,
For if ye defame your own wife, no
wonder that another should do
so!
Soft and fair will tame alike hart
and hind, buck and doe.

On the other hand, be not too hasty
to fight or chide,
If thy wife come to you at any time
with complaint of man or child;
And be not avenged till you know
the truth,
For you might make a stir in the
dark, and afterward it should rue
you both. . . .

And, son, the more goods you have,
the rather bear you meekly,
And be humble, and boast not
overmuch;
It is wasted, for by their boasting
men know fools.

And look you pay well what you
owe, and set no great store by
other riches,
For death takes both high and low,
and then—farewell, all that there
is!
And therefore do by my counsel,

and take example from other
men,
How little their goods avail them
when they be buried in their
graves;
And one that was not of his kin hath
his wife, and all that there is.

Son, keep you from deadly sin, and
assay to enter Paradise.
Make amends for your trespasses
and deal out your goods to poor
men,
Make friends of your foes, and strive
to gain salvation for your soul,
For the world is false and frail, and
every day doth worsen.

Son, set naught by this world's weal,
for it fares as a ripe cherry.
And death is ever, I trow, the most
certain thing that is;
And nothing is so uncertain as to
know the time thereof.
Therefore, my son, think on this, on
all that I have said,
And may Jesus, who for us bore the
crown of thorns, bring us to his
bliss.
Amen.

Questions: What instructions do the parents give their children? What are their greatest concerns? How realistic is the advice? How is the advice similar, and how different, for the girl and the boy?

93. London Wills

Fifteenth-century London was a bustling hub of mercantile activity, sustained by the wealth and work of its forty thousand or so inhabitants. Its residents had many ways of belonging; membership in the city's parishes, guilds, and wards shaped Londoners' spiritual, professional, and political identities, and, as these wills show, close-knit networks of kin, colleagues,

neighbors, and servants created a strong sense of community. Late medieval wills like these offer evidence for family structure, gender roles, inheritance patterns, piety, literacy, and material culture, and provide glimpses into the lives and households of men and women who often left no other trace in the historical record.

Source: ed. F.J. Furnivall, *Fifty Earliest English Wills in the Court of Probate, London: A.D. 1387–1439*, Early English Text Society o.s. 78 (London: Early English Text Society, 1882), pp. 16–17, 21–22; modernized.

Will of Robert Avery, 1410

In the name of God, Amen. I, Robert Avery, firstly bequeath my soul to God and to our Lady, and to all the company of heaven, and my body to be buried in the church of St. Clement outside the Temple Bar in London. Also, I bequeath to the upkeep of the same church 12d. Also, I bequeath to William Begelon a green gown and a striped hood, of the livery of the Company of Cordwainers [shoemakers], and I leave to the Carmelite friars of London 2s. 6d. And so that they will say a [funeral] dirge for my soul in the church of St. Clement, and sing for me also, I bequeath to the Dominican friars within Ludgate 2s. 6d. in the same manner. Also, I bequeath to the Franciscan friars 2s. 7d. to sing a dirge for my soul at the church of St. Dunstan in the West, and to sing for me I also bequeath 2s. 6d. to the Austin friars. Also, I bequeath to John Wyatt a gown and a hood of the cordwainers' livery in two colors, and also a cooking pot that I lent him. Also, I bequeath to Harry Cole a blue gown and a pair of red hose. I bequeath my remaining goods to my wife Joan, to be my chief executor, and to John Robert of London, to be executor with her, with 3s. 4d. for his trouble; for doing this for me he will answer before God. Also, I bequeath 40d. worth of bread, and a cask of ale, to be distributed at my dirge in the church of St. Clement, and 40d. worth of bread and a cask of ale to be distributed in the church of St. Dunstan in the same manner. Written at London on the first day of May in the twelfth year of our king [Henry IV]'s reign. In witness of this deed I have set my seal upon it. Also, I will that Harry Cole, tailor, dwelling outside Temple Bar, be one of my executors, and I bequeath to him for his trouble 3s. 4d.

Will of Richard Young, 1413

In the name of God, Amen. In the year 1413, I, Richard Young, brewer

of London, set forth my testament in this manner: first, I bequeath my soul to almighty God, and to our lady Saint Mary, and to all the fair company of heaven, and my body to be buried in the churchyard of St. Dunstan in the West. Also, I bequeath to the altar of the same church 12d. for forgotten offerings, as well as 6s. 8d. for the upkeep of the said church, and 3s. 4d. to the priests and clerks that minister in the said church to be divided equally among them. And if there be enough remaining after my debts are paid and the remainder of my testament be fulfilled, I leave to my mother 20s. I wish my apprentice John to be released from two years of his term of service, on condition that he be good and true to my wife. Also, I bequeath to the said John a grain vessel, a brewer's float, and a wood plane. Also, I bequeath to my son William a new brass pot, a pan, a bed, and a small pewter pot. The remainder of my goods I bequeath to my wife Amice and my son to support them both. Also, I make Richard Roos, glover, and John Mann, cordwainer, my executors, and each of them is to have for his trouble a good bow.

Questions: What concerns do the testators express? What do we learn about the material world of late medieval London, and the value of various objects? How are differences in status reflected? How do these compare to the Anglo-Saxon wills (doc. 12)?

94. Apprenticeship Documents

The typical career of a person in almost any kind of craft or industry began with apprenticeship, in which the apprentice, typically a child or adolescent, was legally bound to a master or mistress. The apprentice was housed and fed and thoroughly trained in the craft; in return he or she worked exclusively for the master or mistress during the apprenticeship (often a seven-year term) and handed over any profits earned.

Source: indenture, trans. A.E. Bland, P.A. Brown, and R.H. Tawney, *English Economic History: Select Documents* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), pp. 147–48, revised; repudiation, trans. H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth, and XVth Centuries* (London: Longmans, Green, & Company, 1868), pp. 629–30, revised.

Indenture of Apprenticeship, 1459

This indenture, made between John Gibbs of Penzance in the county

of Cornwall, on the one part, and John Goffe, Spaniard, on the other part, witnesses that the aforesaid John Goffe has put himself to the aforesaid John Gibbs to learn the craft of fishing, and to stay with him as apprentice and to serve from the feast of Philip and James [1 May] next to come after the date of these presents until the end of eight years then next ensuing and fully complete; throughout which term the aforesaid John Goffe shall well and faithfully serve the aforesaid John Gibbs and Agnes his wife as his masters and lords, shall keep their secrets, shall everywhere willingly do their lawful and honorable commands, shall do his masters no injury nor see injury done to them by others, but prevent the harm as far as he can, shall not waste his masters' goods nor lend them to any man without his special command. And the aforesaid John Gibbs and Agnes his wife shall teach, train, and inform or cause the aforesaid John Goffe, their apprentice, to be informed in the craft of fishing in the best way they know, chastising him duly and finding for the same John, their apprentice, sufficient food, linen and woolen clothing, and shoes, as befit such an apprentice to be found, during the term aforesaid. And at the end of the term aforesaid the aforesaid John Goffe shall have from the aforesaid John Gibbs and Agnes his wife 20s. sterling without any fraud. In witness whereof the aforesaid parties have interchangeably set their seals to the parts of this indenture. . . .

Repudiation by a Master of a Runaway Apprentice, 1416

On the first day of July, in [1416], Nicholas Wottone, the mayor, and the aldermen, were given to understand by Robert Arnold and other trustworthy persons, that one William Bolecley, son of the late John Bolecley, of Delbury, in the county of Shropshire, who, on 28 March [1411], had apprenticed himself to the aforesaid Robert, and who, on behalf of the said Robert, his master, had heretofore been on business for trading in diverse parts, both on this side of the sea and beyond, had of late without leave, and without reasonable cause, unlawfully withdrawn himself from the service of his master, and departed, to the no small loss and grievance of his said master.

And whereas the said Robert feared that he might very possibly be held responsible for the deeds of the same William, if he should appear under the pretense of being the factor and attorney of his said master, while so living at large, as he might in the name of such master receive diverse quantities of things and merchandise, and various sums of money: therefore . . . the said Robert Arnold came here, before the mayor and aldermen, and in full court repudiated and renounced whatever the same apprentice should have done, as being his factor and attorney, from the time that he so withdrew himself and

departed, or should in any parts whatsoever in future do for him, or in his name.

Questions: What was the purpose of apprenticeship? What was the apprentice's life probably like? What were the hazards of apprenticeship for each party?

95. Visitations of Monasteries

One of the duties of a bishop was the regular inspection of religious communities in his diocese. The documents below consist mainly of evidence given by the individual monks and nuns during such visitations; in each case the bishop then issued specific injunctions charging that all infractions be rectified, ordering audits of the accounts, and so on, but these are omitted here because they tend to repeat the original testimony.

Source: trans. A.H. Thompson, *Visitations of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln*, Vol. 2: *Records of Visitations Held by William Alnwick, Bishop of Lincoln A.D. 1436 to A.D. 1449* (Horncastle: The Lincoln Record Society, 1918), pp. 46–50, 52–53, 68–78.

Dorchester Abbey

The visitation of the monastery of Dorchester, of the order of Saint Austin, of the diocese of Lincoln, performed in the chapter-house there on 27 March, in the year of our Lord 1441, by the reverend father in Christ and lord, the lord William, by the grace of God bishop of Lincoln. . . .

In the first place, as the said reverend father was sitting in his capacity of judge in the beginning of the business of such his visitation, . . . the abbot before all else delivered to the said reverend father the certificate of my lord's mandate which had been addressed to him for the business of such visitation. . . . And when this had been read through, the same abbot showed my lord the title of the confirmation of his election. . . . And then the abbot, being examined, says the following things.

Brother John Clyftone, the abbot, says that, as far as regards the governance of the temporal affairs of the house, while it was in the hands of certain canons of his appointment, the house was heavily in debt; therefore one Marmyone has the direction of such temporal affairs with the consent of the convent. Also he says that, as he believes, the house today is £60 and more in debt.

Brother John Hakeburne, the prior, says that the abbot does not show the state of the house [to the canons], and makes no reckoning in common of his administration, nor has he ever made reckoning. Also he says that secular folk, both male and female, have often passage through the cloister precincts to the church, and this almost of custom.

Brother John Henrethe says that no fixed hour is observed for rising for [the office of] matins, and this because the prior, although he fills the office of the sacrist, takes no care of the clock which this deponent did provide, and therefore it does not strike the hours by day and by night. . . .

Also the canons do often go out of the house to the public taverns in the town and drink and eat with secular folk in the same.

Also he says that, although he himself is stricken in years and is therefore almost incapable of doing tasks outside the cloister, nevertheless they have appointed him to the office of kitchener. Notwithstanding it would be disastrous for him to lay down the office before next Michaelmas, by reason of the provisions which he has made in the same office.

Brother Thomas Tewkesbury says all things are well. Brother Thomas Henrethe says that [the] report was that brother John Shrewesbury, a canon, had carnal knowledge of a certain woman, whose name he knows not, in the bell-tower of the church. The man appeared and, on being charged, denies all crime with such woman since the time of the correction appointed by the abbot, namely, his imprisonment in ward and confinement to cloister and fasting on bread and water. . . .

Brother Nicholas Plymmouthe says as above concerning the neglect of the abbot to render an account. Also he says that the tenements of the monastery in the town of Dorchester are not in good repair.

Brother Walter Dorchestre says that all things are well.

Brother John Shrewesbury says that all things are well.

Brother Ralph Calethra says that brother John Wynchestre, formerly the abbot, receives from the house in meat and drink as much as two canons receive, and £7. Also he says that Marmyone keeps in the same place every week sixteen dogs for coursing [hunting], for which he receives two pecks of barley a week besides bran, and five horses that are fed continually at the expense of the house. The same Marmyone has a chamber within the cloister, and, since the doors of the cloister are in that place, they are left open almost the whole night through, so that secular folk run in and out of the cloister. . . .

Brother Henry Yorke says that all things are well.

Brother John Wynchestre, former abbot, says of the canons that they eat and drink in the public taverns in the town with layfolk: he craves therefore that an injunction be made under pain of imprisonment to them that do [so], as the constitutions of the order require. Also he says that cloister is not kept at the due hours for meditation and reading. Also he says as above of the accounts that they are not rendered by the abbot. Also he says that Marmyone is very burdensome to the house as regards his servants and visitors. . . . Also he says that while according to the rule their canons ought not to go out either on foot or on horseback, save in closed cloaks only, now [however] they walk about in the open cloaks which are called choir copes. Also he prays that ordinance be made that the canons . . . go out together for their recreation and return together, and not roam about by themselves, as is their habit, since from this there springs exceeding scandal to the house. Also he says that by the custom of the monastery there should be appointed caretakers for the young canons, to lay out their private allowance to their advantage until they be advanced to the priesthood, for now the opposite of this is observed. . . .

Brother Walter Dorchestre [is defamed] with Joan Barbour, a married woman. He appeared and denies [his guilt] at any time. . . . Also [he is defamed] with the wife of Thomas Deye, a serving-man in the monastery: then he cleared himself with three of his brethren. He confesses to pawning a gilded chalice to Marmyone for four nobles and alienating five silver spoons belonging to the infirmary. . . . He confesses to possessing hawks: the possession of such birds was forbidden him. He confesses that he has lain diverse times in the infirmary: he was enjoined not to do this henceforward, unless by reason of bodily weakness and with the abbot's permission; and he abjured the fellowship of the woman.

Nicholas Plymmouthe was taken . . . with the tanner's wife . . . , and in proof of such matter they that took them have their shifts to show. He denies his guilt at any time. . . .

The abbot confesses that he pawned a cover of pure gold for a cup and diverse other jewels of the house, without the knowledge or permission of the convent. . . .

The same abbot commits adultery with (1) Joan Baroun, with whom he was found in a suspicious manner in the steward's chamber; (2) the wife of John Forde; (3) the wife of John Roche; (4) the wife of John Prest; (5) the wife of Thomas Fisher; and all these he maintains upon the common goods of the house, and so by pawning, or more accurately, as it is feared, selling the jewels of the house he dilapidates

and wastes all the goods of the house. He does not attend choir for the canonical hours by day or night, nor does he come to chapter to correct transgressions; and by his improvident governance the house is more than £200 in debt. . . .

Catesby Priory

The visitation of the priory of the nuns of Catesby, of the order of Cîteaux, of the diocese of Lincoln, performed in the chapter-house there on the 17th day of the month of July, in the year of our Lord 1442, by the reverend father in Christ and lord, the Lord William, by the grace of God bishop of Lincoln. . . .

In the first place, as the said reverend father was sitting in his capacity of judge as a tribunal in the business of the said visitation on and in the day and place aforesaid, there appeared before him the prioress and convent of the aforesaid place, in readiness, as was apparent, to undergo such visitation. . . . And then the same reverend father proceeded to his preparatory inquiry in the following manner.

Sister Margaret Wavere [the prioress] says that sister A[gnes Allesl]ey has six or seven young folk of both sexes who sleep in the nuns' dorter [dormitory]. [Also she says] that secular folk often enter the nuns' chambers within the cloister, and talkings and junketings take place there without the knowledge of [the prioress]. [Also] she says that she herself has four nuns in her household, and there are three other households of nuns within the cloister. [Also] she says that divine service is not said at the due hours according to the rule, and she says that silence is not observed in the due places. [Also] the nuns send out letters and receive [letters] sent to them, without the advice of the prioress. [Also] she says that the secrets of the house are disclosed in the neighborhood by such seculars when they come there. Also the nuns send out the serving-folk of the priory on their businesses and also receive the visitors for whom they send and with whom they [hold] parleyings and conversations, of which the prioress is ignorant. Also she says that Isabel Benet is defamed with Sir William Smythe, formerly chaplain in that place, and did conceive by him and bore a child, and that she has not corrected her because she dared not. Also the said Isabel is not obedient to the prioress. Likewise the other nuns are sometimes obedient, sometimes not; and the nuns do not wear their veils down to their [eyebrows], but keep their foreheads bare.

Sister Juliane Wolfe says that there should be two lights burning in the upper church and choir during divine service. Also she says that the prioress does not show the account of her administration to the sisters. Also she says that the prioress has pawned the jewels of the

house, to wit, for a period of ten years a cup for the body of Christ, which still remains in pawn, and also other pieces of silver. Also she says that the prioress did threaten that, if the nuns disclosed anything in the visitation, they should pay for it in prison. Also she says that the prioress is accustomed to go by herself to the town of Catesby to the gardens with one man alone, a priest, named William Taylor. Also Isabel Wavere, the prioress's mother, rules almost the whole house together with Joan Coleworthe, the kinswoman of a certain priest, and these two carry the keys of all the offices. Also when guests come to the house, the prioress sends out the young nuns to make their beds, which is a scandal to the house and a perilous thing. Also the prioress does not give the nuns satisfaction in the matter of clothing and money for victuals; and she says that touching the premises the prioress is in the nuns' debt for three quarters of a year. Also the buildings and tenements both within and without the priory are dilapidated, and many have fallen to the ground because of default in repairs. . . .

Sister Agnes Halewey says that within choir and without the prioress pulls the veils from the nuns' heads, calling them beggars and whores. Also, though she is young and would gladly learn religious discipline and other things, the prioress sets her to make beds, to sewing and spinning and other tasks. . . .

The prioress denies the article of cruelty as regards calling them whores and beggars; she denies also the violent laying of hands upon the nuns. As to not having rendered an account, she confesses it, and for the reason that she has not a clerk who can write. As to the burden of debt, she refers herself to the account now to be rendered. As to the neglect in repairing the sheepfolds, she refers herself to the visible evidence. As to pawning the cup, she says that the same was done with the consent of the convent for the payment of tithes. As to felling trees, she says that it was turned to the profit of the house, partly with the knowledge and partly without the knowledge of the convent. As to the disclosures in the last visitation and the reproaching of those who made them and the whipping, she denies the article. As to threatening them lest they should make disclosures, she denies the article. As to the publishing of the secrets of their religion, she denies the article. As to her mother and Joan Coleworthe, she denies the article. As to the bed-making and the other tasks, she denies the article. As to withholding victuals and clothing from the nuns, she confesses it in part. As to the dilapidation of the outer tenements, she says that they are partly in repair and partly not. As to the sowing of discord, she says that she might have done this; she is not certain. As to this, [that] she said that for a purse and money she knew all the disclosures at the last visitation, she flatly denies the article. As to Sir William Taylor,

she denies the crime at any time.

She has the morrow for clearing herself of [the articles] she has denied with four of her sisters, and to receive penance for those to which she has confessed. At which time she brought forward no compurgators; therefore she was declared to have made default in purgation, and, was pronounced to be convicted, and forswore the said man and all familiar converse with the same henceforward. . . .

And then . . . [the bishop] ordained that there be two [nuns] appointed receivers, to receive and to pay out [the money to be kept in a chest] under three locks; and that all live in common, leaving off their separate households, and that these things must begin at Michaelmas [29 September] next. And all were warned to remove all secular folk from the dorter on this side the morrow of the Assumption [before 16 August]. And all were warned under pain of excommunication that none should reproach another by reason of her disclosures. And the prioress was warned to [shut] and open the doors of the church and cloister at the due times, and to keep the keys with her by night in the dorter. . . .

Also the said Dame Isabel on Monday last past did pass the night with the Austin friars at Northampton and did dance and play the lute with them in the same place until midnight, and on the night following she passed the night with the friars preachers at Northampton, luting and dancing in like manner.

Questions: What was life like in these two religious houses? What flaws are evident in the visitation process and reporting? What variety of concerns is found among the monks and nuns? Compare men's and women's experience of monastic life.

96. A London Chronicle on the Wars of the Roses

Until the fifteenth century, history was written almost exclusively by churchmen, but in the 1400s there was an upsurge in historical writing by laymen. Many of them worked in London, producing a group of chronicles with a distinctly urban outlook. The following extract, covering an eventful period (1457–71) during the dynastic struggles known later as the Wars of the Roses, is from such a chronicle. Its system of dating shows this clearly: the author begins each year's entry on 31 October, the first day of the term of London's mayor and sheriffs, whose names are entered along with the year of the reigning king. The main characters in this somewhat convoluted story are, on the Lancastrian side, King Henry VI (r. 1422–61

and 1470–71), his wife, Queen Margaret, and their son, Prince Edward; on the Yorkist side, Duke Richard of York and his sons, including Edward, earl of March (who became King Edward IV), George, duke of Clarence, and Richard, earl of Gloucester (later Richard III); and the famous "kingmaker," Richard earl of Warwick.

Source: ed. C.L. Kingsford, *Chronicles of London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), pp. 168–85; modernized.

Henry VI, 36th year

Godfrey Boleyn, William Edward, Thomas Reyner

In this year [1458] . . . the duke of York and the earls of Warwick and Salisbury were sent to London to the council. And the aforesaid duke came there on 25 January, with 400 men, and was lodged at Baynard's Castle. And on the fifteenth day of the said month came the earl of Salisbury with 500 men, and was lodged in the herber [garden]. And after came the dukes of Exeter and Somerset with 800 men, and these two dukes lay outside the Temple Gate; and the earl of Northumberland, the lord Egremont, and Lord Clifford came with 1,500 men, who were lodged outside the town. For this reason the mayor with the sheriffs, constables, and other officers of the city kept great watch, so that as long as these said lords were at this council the mayor rode about the city daily, and made the circuit of Holborn and Fleet Street, accompanied by 5,000 men or thereabouts, well and sensibly arrayed, to watch and to see that the king's peace was kept. And on 14 February the earl of Warwick came to London from Calais with 600 men, all appareled in red jackets with [the earl's sign of] white ragged staves. And he was lodged at the Grey Friars. And on 7 March the king and queen came to London, at which time a concord and unity was made among these aforesaid lords. In token of this, upon our Lady's day next following, which was 25 March, the king and queen and these aforesaid lords went in procession together royally at St. Paul's. And immediately afterward, the king and all these estates departed. . . .

Henry VI, 38th year

William Hulyn, John Plumer, John Stokker

Because in the year before at Ludlow Field Andrew Trollope, with many of the old soldiers of Calais, went and departed secretly from [Richard] the duke of York's party to the king's party, and there

revealed the secrets of the duke and his host, therefore the said duke, secretly by counsel with such lords as he had in his party, fled and evacuated, leaving behind his people upon the field to make a show of keeping the field until morning. And having departed, the duke went toward Wales with his second son, and so through Wales into Ireland, leaving his eldest son [Edward] the earl of March with the earls of Warwick and Salisbury, and these three, with three or four other persons, rode into Devonshire, where by the aid of one Denham, a squire, they got a ship which cost six score nobles [a noble was a gold coin worth 6s. 8d.], in which they sailed into Guernsey and there rested.

And so in the beginning of this year of [Mayor] William Hulyn, [on 3 November,] the Friday next following All Hallows' day, the earls of March, Warwick, and Salisbury came to Calais in a whaler, and there remained. . . . Also in this year began the Parliament at Coventry, where the duke of York, the earls of March, Rutland, Warwick, and Salisbury, with the said duke's wife, and many other knights, squires, and gentlemen, were attainted for high treason, and the acts of the Parliament made at Westminster after the Battle of St. Albans were annulled. All this season the earls who were in Calais gathered together a great company. . . .

And the second day of July the said lords of Calais came to London; and from there they departed for Northampton, and the people flocked steadily to them. And at Northampton the king chose to do battle, the which battle was won by the earls of March and Warwick and their company after a sore fight. In this battle were slain the duke of Buckingham, the earl of Shrewsbury, Viscount Beaumont, Lord Egremont, and many knights and esquires, with many others. And the king himself was captured on the field, and so brought unto London on 16 July. And immediately after this began a Parliament at Westminster. Also this year, the Friday before Saint Edward's day, [Richard] the duke of York came to Westminster, his sword borne upright before him, and lodged himself in the king's palace, where also the king was, and so entered the Parliament chamber, where the duke took the king's place, claiming it for his right and inheritance, and said that he would keep it to live and die. At this all the lords were sore dismayed; and so the duke remained still at Westminster in the king's palace, and the lords wanted him to speak with the king, but he would not, saying he held of no man but of God. And whereas men deemed the king should have worn his crown upon Saint Edward's day [13 October] with the procession, he did not, nor any of his lords, for they were all at the Black Friars at a council for this matter of the duke of York, and so continued till All Hallows' Eve [31 October].

Henry VI, 39th year

Richard Lee, Richard Flemyng, John Lumbard

And upon All Hallows' Eve, in the beginning of this mayor's year, it was granted and agreed by all the authority of the Parliament, that the king [Henry VI] should enjoy the crown for the term of his natural life, and after the king's death the duke of York was to be king if he still lived, and after them both, the duke's heirs were to be kings. And that also the said duke was to be regent of England and of France during the king's life; and if the king would resign at any time after that, then he should resign to the duke and to no other person, and to his heirs after his days. And then toward evening they came to St. Paul's and heard evensong; and in the morning the king wore his crown, and remained there still in the bishop's palace. And upon Saturday, 9 November, the duke was proclaimed through the city as heir apparent to the crown, and all his progeny after him. And since the queen, the dukes of Buckingham, Exeter, and Somerset, and the earls of Devonshire and Northumberland intended to make war against the king's peace, therefore the duke of York and the earls of Rutland and Salisbury rode northward on 2 December to capture them. And on 30 December they met with the queen's party at Wakefield, where the duke of York and [his second son] the earl of Rutland and Sir Thomas Neville were slain along with many others. And the earl of Salisbury was captured alive, as were John Hardowe, a captain of London, and Hanson of Hull; and these were afterward brought to Pontefract, and there beheaded, and their heads set upon York's gates.

And all this season was great watch made in the city of London, for it was reported that the queen with the northern men would come down to the city and rob and despoil the city, and destroy it utterly, along with all the south country. Thus the king and the lords of his council raised all the southern country to go northward against the queen and her party; and at this time [Edward] earl of March, being in Shrewsbury, hearing of the death of his father, requested aid from the town to avenge his father's death. And from there he went into Wales, where on the following Candlemas [2 February] he fought a battle at Mortimer's Cross against the earls of Pembroke and Wiltshire, where the earl of March had the victory. And the queen with the lords in her party, after they had distressed the duke of York and his company, came southward with a great fellowship and people to the king, to reverse such articles and conclusions as had been taken by the authority of the aforesaid Parliament. Against their coming the duke of Norfolk and the earl of Warwick with a great host went to St.

Albans, and led King Henry with them; and there was fought a great battle upon Shrove Tuesday [17 February] at three o'clock in the morning; and the queen and her party had the victory, and the earl of Warwick with his company fled. And the king was taken, and brought to the queen and his son Prince Edward; and as some said, there the king made him a knight, along with thirty others.

And in this season the prickers or fore-riders of the northern men came to London, and would have come in; but the mayor and the commons would not allow them in. . . . And immediately after this came tidings that the earl of Warwick was coming toward London in support of the earl of March. Wherefore the king, with the queen and the prince, and all their people drew northward, and went into Northumberland. And the following Thursday the earl of March and the earl of Warwick came to London with a great host. And upon the Sunday after, all the host mustered in Saint John's Field, where were read among the people certain articles and points on which King Henry had offended. And then it was asked of the people whether the said Henry was still worthy to reign; and the people cried, "Nay! Nay!" And then they asked if they would have the earl of March to be their king; and they said, "Yea! Yea!" And then certain captains were sent to the earl of March's place at Baynard's Castle, and told the the earl that the people had chosen him as king, for which he thanked God and them, and, by the advice of the bishops of Canterbury and of Exeter, and the earl of Warwick and others, he took it [the crown] upon him. And you shall understand that before King Henry, with the queen and the prince, departed from St. Albans, they beheaded Lord Bonville and Sir Thomas Keryell, who were taken at the aforesaid battle. Then the duchess of York, hearing of the loss of that battle, sent her two young sons George and Richard, over the sea, and they went to Utrecht. . . .

Then on 4 March, which was in the year of our Lord 1460, by the advice of the lords spiritual and temporal, the earl of March by the right of inheritance as the eldest son of the duke of York, took possession of the realm of England, after solemn procession made and done at St. Paul's, in the great hall of Westminster; and there, sitting in the king's seat with the scepter in his hand, it was asked of the people again if they would have him king; and they cried, "Yea! Yea!" And there he took his oath; and this done, he went into the abbey, where he was received with procession bearing the scepter royal, and all the lords did homage to him as to their sovereign lord. And on the following day proclamations were made throughout the city, Edward the Fourth of that name, and when all these ceremonies were done, and "Te Deum" solemnly sung in the abbey, the king came by water to St. Paul's, and there dined. And after dinner the mayor with his

brethren, the aldermen, and certain commoners came to the palace, beseeching the king to be good and gracious to the city, and that they might have their old liberties and franchises granted and confirmed as they had been in his noble progenitors' days, and this was granted to them. And upon the following Saturday the earl of Warwick journeyed northward, with a great many people; and the following week, the king's foot people also went northward with the king's standard. And on Friday of the same week, which was 14 March, the king rode through London and so out at Bishopsgate, with a goodly fellowship with him. . . . And on the following Palm Sunday [29 March] the king met with the northern men, nine miles on this side of York, at a place or village called Sherborne, where he fought and won the battle. In this fight were slain eleven lords with other knights, and about 28,000 men. . . . And after Easter the king removed to Durham, before which departure the earl of Devonshire, who had been taken before in the battle, was beheaded. And a short while after Easter the earl of Wiltshire was captured, and King Henry fled into Scotland with his company; and soon after this the king [Edward] came to Sheen, and from Sheen to Lambeth, and lodged there. And upon Friday, 16 June the mayor of London, with the aldermen and commons, the mayor with his brethren being in scarlet and the commons in green, brought the king from Lambeth to the Tower of London, where he made twenty-eight Knights of the Bath. And in the morning he dubbed four knights before he rode to Westminster. And in the afternoon, on the Saturday, he rode through the city to Westminster. And in the morning on Sunday, which was Saint Peter's eve, and 28 June, he was crowned at Westminster, with great solemnity of bishops and other temporal lords. And on next morning the king wore his crown again in Westminster Abbey, in the worship of God and Saint Peter. And the next morning he wore his crown also in St. Paul's, in the worship of God and Saint Paul. And there the angel came down, and censed him, at which time there was as great a multitude of people in St. Paul's as ever was seen before in any days. And soon after the coronation, the king made his brother George duke of Clarence. . . . And at harvest-time the king rode to Canterbury, and so to Sandwich, and so along by the seaside to Southampton, and so into the marches of Wales, and then to Bristol, where he was royally received with great solemnity, and so about in various places of the land. . . .

Edward IV, 2nd year

Thomas Cook, William Hampton, Barthu. Jamys

In this year, on 3 November, Queen Margaret came out of France into

Scotland with a strength of people; and so entered into England and made open war. Then the king went northward with a great host; and on 13 November the queen, hearing of his coming with his great host, immediately broke formation and fled. And she fled in a caravel, in which was the substance of her goods; and as she sailed there came upon her such a tempest that she was glad to leave the caravel and take a fishing boat, and so she went ashore at Berwick; and the caravel and goods were sunk. . . . And when the king heard of her departure, he intended to pursue her to capture her; but then it happened that he was visited with the sickness of measles, through which his intention was stymied. And on the 12th day of Christmas the Scots came to rescue the castle of Alnwick, but it was yielded to the king also. And the duke of Somerset and Sir Ralph Percy submitted themselves to the king's grace. And about Shrovetide the king came southward. And when the Scots knew of the king's departure they came again to Bamburgh Castle and captured it. Then on Saint John's day at harvest time [29 August] the king went again northward toward Scotland with a great host; and many ships were supplied in the west country, and at London, and at Sandwich, to go by water with victuals and men.

Edward IV, 3rd year

Matthew Philip, Robert Basset, Thomas Muschamp

This year the duke of Somerset, Lord Hungerford, and Lord Roos were captured, with many others, as was King Henry's helmet, richly garnished with two crowns; and his followers were dressed in blue velvet. And forthwith the said duke of Somerset was beheaded with others at Exham. And Lord Hungerford and Lord Roos, with others, were beheaded at Newcastle. And Sir Philip Wentworth and others were beheaded at Middleham, and Sir Thomas Husey with others at York. And immediately after this, at Pontefract, Lord Montagu presented [Edward] the king with King Henry's helmet, and his three followers; but King Henry's whereabouts could not be discovered. . . . Also in this year, the first day of May, the king wedded Dame Elizabeth Grey, formerly wife of Lord Grey of Groby, and daughter of Lord Rivers. . . .

Edward IV, 9th year

Richard Lee, Richard Gardiner, Robert Drope

This year after All Hallows' Eve there were proclamations made in London, that the king had pardoned all the northern men for their

rising, and all others both for the death of Lord Rivers and others; and afterward there was much to-do about a rising of the people in Lincolnshire, wherefore the king intended to go there; but just then Lord Wells, on whom the guilt was placed, was taken and beheaded. And in February the earl of Warwick came to London, where about that time there was much to-do about bills that were set up in diverse places of the city for the duke of Clarence and him [who were turning against King Edward]. . . . In this season the duke of Clarence went to the earl of Warwick to take his side, and the king sent to them willing them to return, and they would have his forgiveness; and they made a pretended agreement, saying that they would gather their people and come; but that same night they broke and fled the land in all haste. . . . And about this time the earl of Oxford, hearing of the duke of Clarence and the earl of Warwick being in France, went over to them. And in the beginning of July Lord Fitzhugh made a rising in the north; but as soon as he knew of the king's coming he fled to Scotland. And then the king remained still at York and thereabouts. And in September the duke of Clarence, the earl of Warwick, the earl of Pembroke, and the earl of Oxford, with various gentlemen, landed at Dartmouth in Devonshire, to whom flocked many people of every region; and the people of Kent made an insurrection in Kent and came to London, where, in the suburbs of the city and other places such as St. Katherine's and Radcliffe, they robbed and despoiled various Dutchmen and their beer houses. And the said duke and his company made, as he came landward, his proclamations in the name of King Henry, who at that time was prisoner in the Tower of London. And when they drew toward King Edward, who was then at York, he feared them, and also he had only a small company about him in comparison with the duke and his company. Wherefore, seeing he could not make his party match theirs, and also because some of his own folk around him were not very loyal to him, he with a few horses took the next way over the Wash in Lincolnshire, where some of his company were drowned, and he escaped with great jeopardy. And then the queen, who was in the Tower, hearing of the king's departure, the first day of October just after this, departed thence secretly and went to Westminster [Abbey], where she abode as a sanctuary woman a good while after. . . . And on 12 October the Tower was given up by arrangement. And then King Henry was taken from the place were he was imprisoned, and lodged in the king's lodging, where the queen before had been lodged. And on the Saturday after that came in the duke of Clarence, and with him the earl of Warwick, the earl of Shrewsbury, and Lord Stanley. And they rode to the Tower and fetched out King Henry, and brought him to St. Paul's and lodged him in the bishop's palace, where the earl of

Warwick also lodged with him. . . .

Henry VI, 1st year; Edward IV, 1st year [the dating reflects Henry's brief return to the throne during Edward's exile in 1470–71]

John Stockton, John Croby, John Ward

This year, on 3 November, Prince Edward the son of King Edward IV, his father then being fled into Flanders, was born at Westminster within the sanctuary, and christened in the abbey; his godfathers were the abbot and prior of Westminster, and his godmother Lady Scrope. Also this year, on 26 November, began the Parliament at Westminster, and from there it was prorogued to St. Paul's and continued there till Christmas. . . . And during this Parliament King Edward was proclaimed usurper of the crown throughout the city, and [Richard] the duke of Gloucester his younger brother was proclaimed traitor, and both were attainted by the authority of the said Parliament. . . . And in the beginning of April, King Edward with his brother the duke of Gloucester came ashore in the north country at a place called Ravenscar; and with them came about 500 Englishmen, and as many Dutchmen; and after landing he drew toward York, making proclamations in King Henry VI's name as he went. And when he came to York the citizens kept him out till they knew what his intent was; and when he had told them that he came with no other intent but to claim his inheritance, which was the duchy of York, he was received into the town, and there refreshed himself and his people; and after that more and more people drew unto him. . . . And on the Thursday before Easter King Henry rode about the city with various lords to gather the people of the city together to keep out King Edward; but notwithstanding, that same afternoon, King Edward came into the city with his company, and was lodged at the palace, where he found King Henry almost alone, for he was a good and spiritual man and set little store by worldly matters. And there King Edward stayed until Easter eve. And in the meantime the duke of Clarence with his affinity gathered their people and came toward London. And on Easter eve the king rode through the city toward Barnet. And the duke and his company were at that time at St. Albans. And that night, contrary to the promise and oath he had made to the French king when he was in France, the said duke of Clarence denied the title of King Henry and went unto his brother King Edward with his people, and left the earl of Warwick and all the remainder of the lords. And early in the morning the battle began, at which battle, on the plain

outside the town of Barnet, on one side were King Edward, King Henry VI, the duke of Clarence, the duke of Gloucester, Lord Hastings, and various other lords and gentlemen. And on the other side were the earl of Warwick, the lord Marquis Montagu his brother, the duke of Exeter, the earl of Oxford, and many other gentlemen. There was a sore fight, but in the end King Edward had the victory. And upon the same Easter day, at the same battle, were slain the earl of Warwick, and his brother the lord marquis, with Lord Barneys from the king's party, and many more from both parties, upon whose souls may Jesus have mercy.

And the same day in the afternoon the king came riding through the city, and prayed at St. Paul's, and so went to Westminster; and after him was brought King Henry, riding in a long blue velvet gown, and so to Westminster, and from there to the Tower, where he remained prisoner as he had done before. And in May Queen Margaret and Prince Edward her son landed; and at Tewkesbury they met [in battle] with King Edward, and there was slain Prince Edward, and his mother was captured and brought to London in a chariot, and afterward sent home to her own country. . . .

Also upon Ascension eve [22 May] King Henry was brought from the Tower though Cheap unto St. Paul's upon a bier; and about the bier were more gloves and staves than torches; and it was said he had been slain by the duke of Clarence; but however he was dead, he was brought there dead, and the corpse lay in the church all night. And in the morning it was conveyed to Chertsey, where he was buried. And within two days afterward, the king with a great host rode into Kent, where he appointed his justices, and made inquiries into [a recent uprising], and there were some hanged, and some beheaded, and the heads were set on London Bridge, and one named Spising was set upon Aldgate; and some were grievously fined. And when the king had set the country in peaceable rule, he came again to London upon Whitsun eve.

Questions: Compare these wars with previous civil wars. What sense does the chronicler give of the issues involved in the contest between the Lancastrian and Yorkist factions? What indications are there of the loyalties and concerns of London? What role did women play in these events?

Fig. 38. Great Chalfield Manor, a moated manor house in Wiltshire built by the Tropnells, who made their fortune in the woolen cloth trade. Late medieval gentry families like the Celys (doc. 97) built many such houses both for defensive purposes and as status symbols.

97. The Cely Letters

Another type of source that we encounter for the first time in the fifteenth century is the private family letter collection. One such set is the correspondence preserved by the Cely family, wool merchants based in London and doing much business in Flanders. In the following letters, written by and to the Celys in 1480 and 1482, we meet, among others, the three sons of Richard the Elder: Robert, Richard the Younger, and George (who is stationed mainly in Calais). William Maryon is a family friend and godfather to the younger Richard; William and John Cely are humble relations. Richard the Younger, as well as helping to run the family business, is in the service of (his "lord") Sir John Weston, prior of the order of the Hospitallers in England.

Source: ed. H.E. Malden, *The Cely Papers: Selections from the Correspondence and Memoranda of the Cely Family, Merchants of the Staple, A.D. 1475–1488* (London: Longmans, Green, & Company, 1900), pp. 34–40, 46, 51–52, 57-60, 73–76, 83–86, 101–4, 106, 110–11, 117, 131–32; modernized.

Richard Cely the Younger to George Cely at Calais, 1480

Right entirely well beloved brother, I recommend me unto you as lovingly as heart can think, informing you that, at the making of this,

our father, mother and we all were in good health, thanked be God. And on the 26th day of this month I received two letters from you, one to our father, another to myself, the which I do well understand, and here I send you enclosed in this a bill of Master Richard's hand, from the mayor of the Staple, for the discharge of 23s. 4d. per sarpler [a sack of wool weighing 2,240 pounds], for seventeen sarplers, £19 16s. 8d. And I feel, by your letter, that the wool shipped at your departing from hence was not so good as I wish it had been. Our father was at the packing thereof himself. I trust to God this wool shall please you better, and as for middle wool, you have all that belongs to that sort. Sir, I have received as of yet but 15 of our fells [fleeces], but they are good. I understand by your writing that you will come into England shortly. I pray you keep your purpose and we shall be merry by God's grace. My lord commends himself to you and looks daily for the goods that you promised to purvey him, and Gladman prays you to purvey a saddle for him somewhat less than my lord's shall be. He lies still at Berwick and I think will do all this summer. Sir, I have received at the day well and truly the £4 sterling from our brother Robert. And now the ship is here, but our father intends not to ship until almost Michaelmas, and therefore we will look for you daily. And sir, I pray you bring with you the reckoning how much I am indebted to you, and we shall see a way therein by the grace of Jesu, who keep you and bring you to England soon and in safety. Written at London the last day of June.

Sir, our father has been sick; I trust it be but a temporary attack, but I would fain that you were here till he be better mended.

By your brother

Richard Cely

Richard Cely the Younger to George Cely at Calais, 1480

Right entirely well beloved brother, I recommend me unto you, informing you at the making of this our father is all whole and right merry, thanked be God, as my uncle the bringer of this can inform you. Sir, our father wishes that you be not over-hasty in coming into England, for this cause: he understood well that the wool that was shipped at your departing from London is not of like goodness to that which is of the last year's growth, and therefore he wishes that you would not sell them together, but as for the middle wool that was last shipped, he desires that Jan Van Der Heyden have it, according to your writing. And our father would fain that you might sell the good wool of the first sort as well as you can. He dare not send any more to Calais till he hears of the sale of the aforesaid. Sir, our father

understands about our brother Robert's childish dealing, and William Burwell has been with him and me, and he says that Dalton or you have a letter of obligation for £14 Flemish, payable to him at the next Saint Baf's [autumn] market, as it had been payable at the Ascension market last, and that made him so bold as he says, but our father wishes that you see the clearance and send us word how it is. No more to you. Written at Bretts [Place, Aveley, Essex], 5 July.

Tomorrow I go with my lord to Gravesend to bring in my Lady Margaret.

By your brother

Richard Cely

John Cely to George Cely at Calais, 1480

Right worshipful and well beloved cousin, I recommend me unto you, and also my sister your aunt commends herself unto you as heartily as she can or may, always thanking you for your great labor and business that you did for her now at this time, for the which she hopes to reward you in such wise as you shall be pleased, with the grace of God.

Item, sir, you have been with Master Ylam, and he has promised to pay this £70 6s. 8d. It is ready for her. Also, sir, you shall understand that my sister, your aunt, has made her exchange with John Matthew, mercer of London, for the £91 Flemish, the which is in your hands, and she shall receive here, from the said John Matthew, at such days as they shall agree, £75 16s. 8d. sterling. And hereupon she has delivered to the said John Matthew the bill of your hand, the which money she prays you heartily to pay to the said John or to his attorney and bringer of your bill, now at this next market, as her very trust is in you, that you will so do.

Furthermore, sir, as for the bills of John Elton that Fethyan asks for, Ingguld says we cannot yet find them, I think, nor never shall. If we can, he shall have them, and so says Fethyan. No more to you at this time, but almighty Jesu have you in keeping. Written at London 6 September, in the year 1480.

By John Cely

Robert Cely to George Cely at Calais, 1480

Right reverend and worshipful brother, I heartily recommend me to you. Furthermore please it you to know that at the making of this letter our father and mother were merry and in good health, blessed be God, and so we hope that you be. And as for our brother Richard

Cely, he is departed with my lord of St. John's with the ambassadors into France, whereof I suppose you understand right well. And I am at London and have been greatly diseased almost ever since you departed from Aveley, and for the most part have kept to my bed, for I have been so sick and sore that I go with a staff. I thank God I am now daily amended.

Item, brother George, the cause of my writing is this, and I pray you heartily for our good brotherhood, that you will do so much for me, to see that William Burwell, mercer of London, be satisfied for his bill of £14 15s., and what money you lay out for me, I will satisfy you for here. For if I had not had that money from William Burwell at that time, I would have lost all my plate. Wherefore, good brother, remember me, and I shall be good for it, with the grace of God, who have you and all of us in his blessed keeping. Amen. Written at London, 6 September, with great pain.

By your brother,

Robert Cely

Richard Cely the Younger to George Cely at Calais, 1480

Right entirely well beloved brother, I recommend me heartily unto you, and I thank you for your great cost and share that you did to me and my fellows at our last being with you at Calais. Sir, we had a fair passage, and the Saturday after our departing we came to the king at Eltham, to whom my lord was right welcome, and there we tarried till the king's daughter was christened, whose name is Bridget. And the same night right late we came to London, and here I found our father, brother Robert, and my godfather Maryon, and they are merry. Our mother is in Essex; I have not yet seen her. My godfather Maryon told me that he has written letters to you; I understand a part of them. Robin Good told our father that you had five horses, and I told him you had only three, and how you have sold the first piebald horse to Sir Humfrey Talbot, and he was well content. I told our father of the loss of Twissulton's mule. Sir, our father will not ship until March, and he would fain that the wool were packed. I feel from him that he would not prefer that you come home at Christmas, for he thinks there will be sales about Twelfth Night. There is great death of sheep in England. Sir, I would write more to you, but I depart into Essex this same day to see our mother. No more to you. Written at London 15 November.

By your brother

Richard Cely

If the mule may be gotten, send him to our father, for he would like to have him.

William Maryon to George Cely at Calais, 1480

Right reverend sir and my special good friend, I recommend me unto you. Furthermore, may it please you to know that I have received a letter from you written at Calais on 12 November, the which letter I have read, and well understand that you have received a letter from me, written at London on 9 November, in the which letter I wrote a clause about your horse, the which I understand you took sore at your stomach. Sir, in good faith I am sorry therefore, for if I had known that you would take so sore I would not have written so unto you, not if I would have gotten thereby 20 nobles. But you shall understand what caused me so for to write unto you. Sir, you wrote unto my master that you supposed by likelihood it should be war, and if it so be it should be war, there should be great riding and much ado about Calais, and if you were well horsed I fear me that such soldiers as you are acquainted with should cause you for to put your body in adventure, and if there came anything to you otherwise than good, in good faith a great part of my master's joy in the world would be removed. Sir, this caused me in good faith for to write so unto you as I did, for I know well if you have no good horse they will not desire you out of town. Sir, in good faith, neither my master your father nor my mistress your mother know anything of my writing, and in good faith you shall understand that I wrote not so unto you for no spite, neither for no evil that I have to you, but for great love, for in good faith, saving my master our father and your brother Richard, in good faith there is no man in England I would do so much for, and that you should know, if you had need. And that caused me to be so bold to write to you, the which I would it could be undone, since you take it as you do. No more unto you at this time, but the Trinity have you in his keeping. Written at Aveley, 19 November.

By William Maryon

George Cely to Richard Cely the Elder at London, 1480

Right reverend and worshipful father, after all due recommendation I recommend me unto you in the most lowliest wise that I can or may. Furthermore, may it please you to understand that I have sold unto Gysbright Van Wijnsberg two sarplers of good cottes. He has taken one of the twenty that is packed, and again another of the other sort, as a bill enclosed herein makes mention, etc. It is so

that I have not yet made an end of the packing of your sort. Of twenty sarplers there are eleven packed already. The cause of the delay of the rest is that there was much better wool, and as soon as that can be wound and made ready, it shall be entered into that which is to pack. . . . Here there are as now but few merchants. There shall be some fete done between Christmas and Candlemas, because of the ordinance, wherefore now I intend to tarry and come not to you until Candlemas. As of any tidings here, I can not write you as yet. There is, but I cannot have the truth thereof. There has been a variance between the duke's men of war and his Germans, and there are many of his Germans slain, and therefore he takes great displeasure, for there are various of his gentlemen stolen away therefore, and some are come to Calais, and one of them is sent to our sovereign lord the king, and some have gone over to the Frenchmen, and the French king has gotten lately various of the best men of war the duke had, whereof he makes him now bold. No more unto you at this time, but Jesu have you and all yours in his keeping. Amen. Written at Calais, 24 November 1480.

By your son,

George Cely

It is so that I do send Harry my boy to wait upon my brother this Christmas.

William Cely to George Cely at Bruges, 1481

Right worshipful sir, after due consideration I lowly recommend me unto your mastership, etc. Furthermore may it please your mastership to understand that I have received a letter from you, the which I have read, and well understood all things therein. And as for your debentures, I have delivered them to William Bentham according to your commandment, and he has promised me as soon as he is furnished with money I shall be paid and satisfied for the exchange of 10s. of the pound with the first. And as for your warranties of 15s. of the pound, I have spoken to the master lieutenant for them, and he has promised me that at your coming to Calais they shall be set upon your bills of custom and subsidy, etc.

Also, sir, may it please you to know that on 12 May two Frenchmen chased an English ship in front of Calais, and Fetherston and John Davy and Thomas Overton lay in Calais Road, but themselves were ashore. And as soon as they saw them they got boats and went aboard, and so did the master marshal and Sir Thomas Everingham and Master Messefold with diverse soldiers of Calais, and

rescued the English ship and took the Frenchmen and brought one of them into Calais haven. The other was so great she might not come in, but they brought the master and the captain to my lord, and they say there are Scots amongst them. And they say that Fetherston and his fellows are gone with the biggest Frenchman into England, etc.

Also, sir, it is said here that after this day, 12 May, no man shall keep any lodging of guests, strangers, or Englishmen outside the gates of Calais, except two houses assigned, that is, the searcher's house and the water bailiff's house. And any man that has housing outside the gates is warned to remove his house as quickly as he can into the town, and set it there where he please that he has ground, and if he do not so, stand at his own risk at such time that it shall come to be plucked quickly down or else burned for the shorter work. And betwixt this and that time, none of them are so hardy, except the two places aforementioned, to lodge no man over a night, on pain of treason, etc.

Also, sir, may it please you to know that Sir William Chanon, who was lodged with John Fowle, is dead; he was buried last Sunday, and Sir William Stappel, priest, has his benefice granted by my lord, etc. Sir, other tidings have we none, but the Almighty have you in his keeping. Written at Calais, 13 May

by your servant

William Cely

Richard Cely the Younger to George Cely at Calais, 1481

Right entirely well beloved brother, I recommend me heartily unto you, thanking you for all good brotherhood that you have showed to me at all times. Sir, you know well that I have been in the north country, and there I have had great share of my old acquaintance, as the bringer hereof can inform you. And as for my uncle, his executors have promised me and Plumpton by the faith of their bodies to be with our father here on Michaelmas, and to make an end with him. And as I went northward, I met Roger Wigston on this side of Northampton, and he desired me to do so much as drink with his wife at Leicester. And after that I met with William Dalton, and he gave me a token to [take to] his mother. And at Leicester I met with Ralph Dalton, and he brought me to his mother, and there I delivered my token, and she prayed me to come to breakfast on the morrow. And so I did, and Plumpton too, and there we had a great welfare, and there was Friar East, and I pray you thank them for me. Sir, if you remember, we talked together in our bed of Dalton's sister, and you feared the conditions of her father and brethren, but you need not. I

saw her, and she was at breakfast with her mother and us. She is as goodly a young woman, as fair, as well-bodied, and as serious as any I have seen these seven years, and a good height. I pray to God that it may be imprinted in your mind to set your heart there. Sir, our father and I talked together in the new orchard on Friday last, and he asked me many questions of you, and I told him all as it was, and he was right sorry for the death of the child [George's illegitimate child]. And I told him of the good will that the Wigstons and Daltons owe to you, and how I liked the young gentlewoman. And he commanded me to write to you, and he would gladly that it were brought about and that you worked at it betimes. And I have told our father of Chester's daughter, how that I would gladly be there, and our father was right glad of this communication. Dalton's mother commends herself to you and thanks you for the knives that you sent to her. Our father has received a letter from you whereby he understood about the sale of two sarplers and a poke [a smaller bale of wool]. As for the money that is by you, he wishes that it lie by you until Ascension market, and let the mercers Burwell and Palmer have the longer days, and their money according. Sir, I thank you that it pleased you to leave me Joyce, for he has done me good service in this journey, and I have delivered to him 10s. to bring him to you. My godfather has been sick, but he is well mended, thanked be God. This same day my lord is come to London to ask the king's leave to go to Rhodes, for he is sent for. Sir, I send you by Joyce a purse such as was given me at York, and I pray you buy for Alison Michael a mantel of fine black shanks, for I have money therefor, and she commends herself to you. No more to you at this time. Jesu keep you. Written at London, 4 June.

By your brother

Richard Cely

Richard Cely the Younger to George Cely at Calais, 1481

Right well beloved brother, I recommend me unto you with all mine heart, informing you that, at the making of this, our father and mother were well comforted and send you their blessings. It was so that by the means of Brandon, our father and I were indicted for slaying a hart that was driven into Kent, the which we never saw nor knew of. And this day I have been with Master Montgomery and given him the value of a pipe of wine to have us out of the book before it be showed to the king, and so he has promised me, and to be a good master to our father and us in the matter between Brandon and us. John Frost, forester, brought me to his mastership and acquainted me

with a gentleman of his whose name is Ramston, that is a close man to Master Montgomery, and so I must inform him of my matters at all times, and he will show them to his master, etc.

. . . Sir, it was so that when [Sheriff William] Wikyng was dead and another was chosen, our father was nearly called upon [to be sheriff], and but that [Richard] Chary was better known, our father would have been sheriff, etc. Our father wishes that you buy 600 sticks more canvas at this market. And I understand that you have sold your great gray horse, and I am right glad thereof, for two is as good as twenty. I understand that you have a fair hawk; I am right glad of her, for I trust God she shall make you and me right great sport. If I were sure at what passage you would send her I would fetch her at Dover and keep her until you come. A great misfortune has befallen your bitch, for she had fourteen fair puppies, and after she had whelped she would never eat meat, and so she is dead and all her puppies, but I trust to get before your coming as fair and as good a dog to please that gentleman. I understand you intend to be with us for Christmas, and whereof am right glad, and we shall make merry whether Brandon wishes or not, by the grace of God. And as for Pie, he is as hearty as ever I saw him and in reasonable good condition and whole. William Cely does his part well in keeping him. And as for our pension in Furnival's Inn, it shall be paid within these four days. Sir, hereafter appear our father's shipping and ships' names and masters:

Item, in the *Mary of London*, William Sordywoll, master: seven packs Cotswold fells bestowed behind the mast. Six are under the deck and a pack lies uppermost upon Dalton's, behind the mast. Total 2,108 fells.

Item, in the *Christopher of Rainham*, Harry Wilkins, master: seven packs and a half Cotswold; they lie behind the mast and no man's above them. Total 3,000 fells.

Item, in the *Thomas of Maidstone*, Harry Lawson, master: six packs Cotswold mixed with summer London fells, marked with O. They lie before the mast under hatches and part behind, even next to the mast in a pile as broad as two fells long. Total 2,003 fells.

Item, in the *Mary Grace of London*, John Lockington, master: six packs of fells, whereof 556 are winter London fells; they are marked with C. And the rest are Cotswold; they lie behind the mast, and Granger's upon them, and reeds between them. Total 2,004 fells.

Item, in the *Michael of Hull*, Andrew Good, master: one pack of fells Cotswold mixed with summer London, marked with O; they lie behind the mast uppermost, and I have paid him his whole freight for that pack of fells. Total 400 fells.

Item, in the *Thomas of New Hythe*, Robert Hevan, master: a pack and 64 fells Cotswold; they lie behind the mast, and Betson's fells lie above them. Total 464 fells. . . .

Item, in the *Mary of Rainham*, John Dangell, master, I shipped four packs and 41 fells of yours and mine; they lie behind the mast. Three packs of them are Cotswold and one pack and 41 fells are Warwickshire; they lie uppermost. I pray you lay them by themselves to avoid hurting the other sort. 1,641 fells.

Item, my godfather has six and a half packs and 57 fells in the same ship, and no man has a fell in that ship but we, my godfather, and I. Total 2,657 summer London fells.

And I have spoken with William Dalton and showed him the clause that you wrote about Leicester in, and he was right glad thereof. I was his guest on Hallows' eve in Old Fish Street at dinner with him and Charles Willers. I pray you thank them at their coming to Calais. Sir, I would gladly hear some good tidings of your matter that Clays De Moll has in hand. No more to you at this time. Jesu keep you. Written at London, 5 November.

By your brother

Richard Cely

John Dalton to George Cely in London, 1482

Right entirely well beloved brother, after all due recommendation I recommend me unto you as heartily as I can or may. Furthermore, sir, I have received two letters from you, by the which letters I understand about your great heaviness for your father, on whose soul God have mercy. Furthermore, sir, Gysbright Van Wijnsberg has been here since you departed, and he will be here again, he tells me, within 15 days after Candlemas, and see the eleven sarplers Cotswold of yours, on the which I have taken a good penny from him. For also, sir, no Hollanders have come here since you left, except one fellowship of Delft, to which I could sell no fleeces and none since. We have made bills of 13s. 4d. on the sarplers, the which must be sent over into England and there paid at pleasure. Your father's bill at pleasure amounts unto £15 6s. 8d. sterling; your brother Richard's 44s. sterling; and William Maryon's bill £3 10s. 8d. sterling. Also, sir, since it is so as it is of my master your father, in the reverence of God take it patiently and hurt not yourself, for that which God will have done no man may be against. Also, sir, all your fells here do well. . . . Your horses do well, God save them. Also, sir, whereas we ate the good puddings, the woman [Margery] of the house that made them, as I understand, is with child with my brother that had the Irish dagger

from me [George]. Sir, all our household by name recommend themselves unto you and they are right sorry for your heaviness. In good faith, sir, I pray you that I may be recommended unto your brother Richard Cely, and each of you cheer the other in the reverence of our Lady, who preserve you. At Calais, 27 January.

Your brother to my power,

John Dalton,

that I can or may.

Joyce Parmenter to George Cely in London, 1482

Right worshipful master, I recommend me unto you, letting you know that I have received two letters that came from you, by the which writing I understand my master your father is deceased, on whose soul God have mercy. Letting you know that your wool and fells are in good sort. We lack nothing but only one pelt and fur. We can have none here under 20d. a dozen. If it please you to send me a thousand with the next shipping that comes between, I would pray you. Also, your brother Dalton has promised me one thousand pelts that he has bought in Flanders; they are not sufficient.

Also, I let you know that Bottrell has broken up a window of the west side of your woolhouse, and there he has cast in horse dung upon your fells. I did make a man with a dung fork in his hand to cast the dung aside. Bottrell came in and took the fork from him and beat him well and unthriftily. I, seeing his uncourteous dealing, prayed John Ekynton, Robert Turney, John Ellyrbek, and William Hill, and others, to breakfast in your chamber for this intent: to see the hurts and harms he did you upon your goods, that they might bear witness another day, whatsoever you would say thereto. Letting you know that there are no Hollanders come unto their day that their bill was made, and then there came one cart. . . . Also I let you know that Charles has offered £8 Flemish for Bayard your horse. I have granted him for £11, wherefore I pray you to send me word how you wish to be disposed therein. Also, I let you know that where you go and eat puddings, the woman is with child as I understand. . . . I can [write] no more to you, but I beseech you to recommend me to my good mistress your mother, to all my masters your brethren, and to Hankyn, and that all your household is in safety, blessed be Jesu, who preserve you both body and soul.

At Calais, 30 [January.]

By your servant

Joyce Parmenter

Richard Cely the Younger to George Cely at Calais, 1482

Right entirely well beloved brother, I recommend me heartily unto you, informing you that, at the making of this, our mother, brother, my godfather, and the household are in good health, thanked be the good Lord. Sir, the same day that I departed into Cotswold I received a letter from you written at Calais on 14 April, wherein I find the inventory of such goods that were our father's, and money on that side of the sea. Sir, I have not spoken with the bishop's officers since I received your letter. When I spoke last with them they said that all things should wait for your coming. I understand by your letter that you will make over above £500. I have been in Cotswold this three weeks and packed with William Midwinter twenty-two sarplers and a poke, whereof four are middle. William Bretten says it is the fairest wool that he saw this year. . . .

Sir, I write to you a process. I pray God send thereof a good end. The same day that I came to Northleach, on a Sunday before Matins, from Burford, William Midwinter welcomed me, and in our communication he asked me if I were in any way of marriage. I told him nay, and he informed me that there was a young gentlewoman whose father's name is Limerick, and her mother is dead, and she shall inherit from her mother £40 a year, as they say in that country. And her father is the greatest ruler and richest man in that country, and there have been great gentlemen to see her, who would like to have her. And before matins were done, William Midwinter had moved this matter to the greatest man serving the gentleman Limerick, and he went and informed the foresaid of all the matter, and the young gentlewoman too. And the Saturday after, William Midwinter went to London. . . . When I had packed at Camden and William Midwinter parted, I came to Northleach again to make an end of packing, and on Sunday next after, the same man that William Midwinter had talked first with came to me and told me that he had talked to his master according as Midwinter desired him, and he said his master was right well pleased therewith. And the same man said to me, if I would tarry until May Day, I should have a sight of the young gentlewoman, and I said I would tarry with a good will. And the same day her father should have sat [as a justice of the peace] at Northleach for the king, but he sent one of his clerks and rode himself to Winchcombe. And to matins the same day came the young gentlewoman and her stepmother, and I and William Bretten were saying matins when they came into church. And when matins was done, they went to a kinswoman of the young gentlewoman, and I sent to them a half-gallon of white romney [wine], and they took it thankfully, for they had come a mile on foot that morning. And when mass was done, I

came and welcomed them and kissed them, and they thanked me for the wine and prayed me to come to dinner with them. And I excused myself, and they made me promise to drink with them after dinner. And I sent them for dinner a gallon of wine, and they sent me a roasted young heron. And after dinner I came and drank with them and took William Bretten with me, and we had a right good communication. And the person pleases me well, as by the first communication. She is young, little, and very well-favored and witty, and the country speaks much good about her. Sir, all this matter waits for the coming of her father to London, that we may understand what sum he will part with [as dowry] and how he likes me. He will be here within three weeks. I pray send me a letter how you think by this matter.

Michael Coke and his wife from York have been with my mother all this while, and my mother and I have made them great cheer. And my mother has given to Michael's wife a crimson gown of her wearing, and she has prayed me to write to you to buy for her some squirrel fur for to trim the same gown, and Coke's wife and she pray you to buy for them ten minks as fine as you can find in the market, and you shall be paid for them. I shall send to Calais by Robert Herrick at this Whitsuntide the bill of 13s. 4d.; it amounts to £15 6s. 8d. and paid. I understand by William's letter that you have writing from my lord of St. John's. I pray you send me part of your tiding. I sent to you the last that I had. Sir, they begin to ship at London, and all our wool and fell is in Cotswold except four sarplers; therefore we can do nothing at this time. Sir, I think money will be good at this market, for the king has sent to the mercers and let them know he will have three money exchanges, one at Bruges, another at Calais, the third at London. And as I am informed, any merchant of the Staple that sells his wool, he may buy what wares he will again. And they that are nowhere shall bring in their money into the king's exchange at Bruges or Calais and be paid at London at a month day, and the money shall be established at 8s. The mercers are not content therewith. I pray you remember our bows. No more. Written at London, 13 May.

By Richard Cely

Richard Cely the Younger to George Cely at Calais, 1482

Right well beloved brother, I recommend me heartily unto you, informing you that I have received a letter from you by Robert Herrick, whereby I understand that you will send over a young horse. We shall keep him with grass as well as we can till you come, according to your writing. Sir, it was told Robert Herrick at Calais that

our mother would be married or in the way of marriage, so much so that they said our mother would go on procession on Corpus Christi day in a crimson gown, and her household in black. And on my soul, our mother went at that day, but as she went at our father's month's mind [in mourning]. And therefore I would like it to be found out who the bringer of that [rumor] to Calais was.

Sir, we are greatly envied; I trust Jesu we shall be able to withstand our enemies. Sir John is in great trouble, and God knows full wrongfully, and some of them to whom we gave gowns labor most against him. I had rather than a good payment that you were here. No more to you. Written at London, 24 June. I pray Jesu send you safe hither. And the son of Robert Herrick was chased by Scots between Calais and Dover; they narrowly escaped.

By Richard Cely

William Cely to George Cely at London, 1482

Right worshipful sir, after due recommendation I lowly recommend me unto your mastership. . . . Furthermore may it please your mastership to be informed that Margery commends herself unto your mastership, and she tells me she should have such raiment as a gown and other things for her churching [after childbirth], as she had the other time, whereof she prays you for an answer. Also, Sir John Dalton desires to have two rooms in your stable, and he would pay for it, and he told me he would write to you for the same, but Joyce told me that your mastership had granted him the stable and the house at his coming again to Calais for to occupy it, and your mastership to have your room at your coming, etc. Sir, I pray your mastership for an answer about this, etc. Sir, as for your other stuff, I shall send it unto your mastership by one of the woolers, etc. No more unto your mastership at this time, but Jesu keep you. Written at Calais, 13 August.

By your servant

William Cely

William Cely to George Cely at London, 1482

Right worshipful sir, after due recommendation I lowly recommend me unto your mastership. Furthermore may it please your mastership to be informed that Margery's daughter is passed to God. It was buried this same day, on whose soul Jesu have mercy. Sir, I understand it had a great pang; what sickness it was I cannot say, etc. Item, sir, Bottrell is departed out of Calais and is in England. And this

day his wife goes to him with all her stuff, and they are commanded that they shall not come within the town of Calais as long as my lord chamberlain is lieutenant of Calais, etc. No more unto your mastership at this time but Jesu keep you. Written at Calais, 29 August.

By your servant

William Cely

Questions: What do the letters reveal of the personalities of family members and relations within the family? What are the interests of the Cely brothers? What difficulties do they cope with, and how? Trace the history of George's love life.

98. The Accession of Richard III

Following the death of Edward IV, the king's younger brother Richard, duke of Gloucester, had his twelve-year-old nephew Edward V and his younger brother Richard, duke of York, installed in the Tower of London; the "Princes in the Tower," as they became known, subsequently disappeared (probably murdered at Richard's order). Richard claimed the throne for himself, justifying what many contemporaries viewed as his usurpation as a restoration of good royal government. In its original form, the Titulus regius *("royal title") purported to be a petition by the citizens of London asking Richard to take the throne, something he did in July 1483. When Richard convened his only Parliament in January 1484, the document was revised and acquired the status of a statute; it is printed in this form below. The* Titulus regius *was repealed immediately after the accession of Henry VII, who unsuccessfuly attempted to destroy all copies of the document.*

Source: *Rotuli Parliamentorum ut et petitiones et placita in Parliamento*, ed. John Strachey et al., 6 vols. (London, 1767–77), vol. 6, pp. 240–42; modernized.

First, we consider how for many years past this land enjoyed great prosperity, honor, and tranquility, because the kings then reigning followed the advice and counsel of certain Lords Temporal and Spiritual, and of other persons of seriousness, prudence, skill, and experience, fearing God and having tender zeal and affection for the dispensing of justice and the common good of the land. Then our Lord God was feared, loved, and honored; then there was peace and tranquility in the land, and concord and charity among neighbors; then the malice of external enemies was mightily resisted and repressed, and the land honorably defended with many great and

glorious victories; then commerce abundantly prospered. By means of all these things, the land was greatly enriched, so that all the merchants and craftsmen, and other poor people who earned their livings in various occupations made sufficient profit to support themselves and their households, and avoided miserable and intolerable poverty. But afterward, when those who ruled and governed this land delighted in sycophancy and flattery, and were led by sensuality and concupiscence to follow the counsel of insolent, vicious, and inordinantly greedy persons, and to despise the counsel of good, virtuous, and prudent persons, then the prosperity of this land daily decreased. . . . Whereby it is likely that this realm will fall into a state of extreme misery and desolation—God prevent it!—unless due provisions are made for the necessary remedies in great haste.

Besides this, among other things we especially consider how during the reign of King Edward IV, lately deceased, as all England has cause to say, after the wicked pretended marriage was made between the said King Edward and Elizabeth, formerly wife of Sir John Grey, knight, who has now for many years called herself queen of England, the entire rule of the state was perverted, as were the laws of God and God's Church, and the laws of nature and of England, along with the laudable customs and liberties to which every Englishman is heir, were broken and condemned against all reason. This land was ruled by selfishness and pleasure, fear and dread, and all justice and law was laid aside and despised, with the result that there followed much discord and mischief, including murders, extortions, and oppressions; no man was sure of his life, land, or livelihood, nor of the safety of his wife, daughter, or servant, and every good maiden and woman feared she would be ravished and defiled. . . . And here also we consider how the said pretended marriage between the abovenamed King Edward and Elizabeth Grey was made through great arrogance, without the knowledge and consent of the lords of this land, and also through sorcery and witchcraft committed by the said Elizabeth and her mother Jacquetta, duchess of Bedford, as is the common opinion of the people and the public report throughout the land. . . . And here also we consider how the said pretended marriage was made privately and secretly, without the reading of banns, and in a private chamber, a profane place, rather than openly in the sight of the Church, as is contrary to the laws of God's Church and to the custom of the Church of England. And we also consider how, at the time the said pretended marriage was contracted, as well as before and afterward, the said King Edward was married, having pledged himself to one Dame Eleanor Butler, daughter of the old earl of Shrewsbury. . . . The foregoing things being true, it evidently follows that the said King Edward and the said

Elizabeth lived together sinfully and damnably in a state of adultery during his lifetime, against the law of God and his Church. Therefore, it is no wonder that since the sovereign lord and head of this land was of such an ungodly disposition, and thus provoked the ire and indignation of our Lord God, that such heinous abuses and misfortunes occurred in the realm among its subjects. Also, it evidently follows that all the children of the said King Edward are bastards, and thus unable to inherit or claim anything by inheritance, according to the law and custom of England.

Moreover, we consider how afterward, by the elders of this realm assembled in a Parliament held at Westminster in the seventeenth year of the reign of the said King Edward IV, he then being in possession of the crown and realm, by an act made in the same Parliament, George, duke of Clarence, brother of the said King Edward now deceased, was convicted and attainted of high treason, as is described in detail in the said act. By reason of this, all children of the said George forfeited any right and claim to the crown and royal dignity of this realm, according to its ancient laws and customs.

Besides this, we consider that you are the undoubted son and heir of the late Richard, duke of York, true inheritor of the crown and royal dignity, and by right king of England through inheritance, and that at this time, according to the above considerations, there is no other living person except you that may by right claim the said crown and royal dignity through inheritance. Further, you were born in this land, and for this reason we deem you more naturally inclined to guard its prosperity and common good, and all three estates of the land have more certain knowledge of your birth and parentage. We also consider your great understanding, prudence, fairness, princely courage, and your memorable and laudable deeds in various battles, which we know you have fought for the salvation and defence of this same realm, and also the great nobility and excellence of your birth and blood, as being a descendant of the three most royal houses in Christendom, that is, England, France, and Spain.

Thus, having diligently considered these issues, and greatly desiring the peace, tranquility, and public good of this land, and its return to its former honorable state and prosperity, and having particular confidence in your great prudence, justice, princely courage, and excellent virtue, we hereby choose you, as attested in this document, high and mighty prince, as our king and sovereign lord, whose inherited right it is to be thus chosen. And we humbly desire, pray, and require your said noble grace, according to the election of the three estates of this land, to accept and take up as your true inheritance the said crown and royal dignity, along with all

things pertaining to it, as do rightly belong to you by inheritance as well as by lawful election. If you will do so, we promise to serve and assist your highness as true and faithful subjects and liegemen, and to live and die with you in this matter and to support you in every other just quarrel. . . . May our lord God, the king of kings, by whose infinite goodness and eternal providence the whole world is governed, lighten your soul and make your grace act according to his will and pleasure and in the interests of the common and public good of this land, in this matter as in all others, so that after great clouds, troubles, storms, and tempests the sun of justice and grace may shine on us to the comfort and gladness of all true Englishmen.

It is true that our sovereign lord the King Richard III's right to the crown and royal dignity of this realm of England, with all things pertaining within and outside the same realm, is just and lawful, grounded as it is upon the laws of God and nature and also upon the ancient laws and praiseworthy customs of this said realm, as attested by those who are learned in the said laws and customs. Yet nevertheless, seeing that the greater part of the people are not sufficiently learned in the said laws and customs, they may not understand the truth and right of this matter, and doubts and questions may arise. But the court of Parliament is of such great authority, and the people of this land of such a disposition that, as experience teaches us, the declaration of any truth or right made by the three estates of the realm assembled in Parliament and by its authority produces faith and certainty more effectively than anything else and, thus quieting men's minds, removes all occasion for doubts and seditious talk. Therefore, at the request and by the assent of the three estates of the realm, that is to say, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons, assembled in this present Parliament, let it be pronounced, decreed, and declared by its authority that our said sovereign lord the king was, and is, the true and undoubted king of this realm of England, with all things pertaining to this title within the said realm and outside it, by right of consanguinity and inheritance, as well as by lawful election, consecration, and coronation.

Questions: How is Richard's claim to the throne justified? On what grounds does the document criticize Edward IV? Are there hints of resistance to Richard's coup? How effective would this decree be as a piece of propaganda?

99. The Battle of Bosworth

In 1485 the Yorkist King Richard III (r. 1483–85), who had succeeded his brother Edward IV and nephew Edward V, faced

a challenge from Henry Tudor, who defeated him at the Battle of Bosworth and became Henry VII (r. 1485–1509). The battle is described by Polydore Vergil, an Italian humanist who came to England in 1502 and wrote his Anglica Historia *for Henry VII; Vergil's history, finished a few years after his royal patron's death, became an important source for the chronicler Edmund Hall and, through Hall, for Shakespeare.*

Source: ed. H. Ellis, *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History . . . from an Early Translation* (London: Camden Society, 1844), pp. 221–26, revised.

In the meantime King Richard [III], hearing that the enemy drew near, came first to the place of fight, a little beyond Leicester (the name of that village is Bosworth), and there, pitching his tents, refreshed his soldiers that night from their travail, and with many words exhorted them to the fight to come. It is reported that King Richard had that night a terrible dream; for he thought in his sleep that he saw horrible images, as it were of evil spirits haunting him, as it were before his eyes, and that they would not let him rest; which vision truly did not so much strike into his breast a sudden fear, as replenish the same with heavy cares: for immediately afterwards, being troubled in mind, his heart told him from this that the outcome of the battle would be grievous, and he did not buckle himself to the conflict with such liveliness of courage and countenance as before. So that it should not be said that he showed this heaviness, appalled by fear of his enemies, he reported his dream to many in the morning. But I believe it was no dream but a conscience guilty of heinous offenses, a conscience (I say) so much the more grievous as the offenses were more great, which, thought of at no other time, yet in the last day of life often brings to mind the memory of past sins . . . . Now I return to my purpose. The next day afterward King Richard, furnished thoroughly with all manner of things, drew his whole host out of their tents, and arrayed his vanguard, stretching it forth in a wondrous length, so fully replenished both with footmen and with horsemen that to the beholders afar off it gave a terror for the multitude, and in the front were placed his archers, like a most strong trench and bulwark; of these archers he made John, duke of Norfolk, the leader. After this long vanguard followed the king himself, with a choice force of soldiers.

In the meantime Henry [Tudor], being departed from the conference with his friends, began to take better heart, and without any tarrying encamped near his enemies, where he rested all night, and very early in the morning commanded the soldiers to arm themselves, sending also to Thomas Stanley, who was now

approaching the place of fight, as in the midway between the two forces, asking that he would come [to help Henry instead of Richard] with his forces, to set the soldiers in array. Stanley answered that Henry should set his own folks in order, before he should come to him with his army well appointed. With which answer, given contrary to what was looked for, and to that which the opportunity of time and weight of cause required, though Henry was not a little vexed, and began to be somewhat fearful, yet without lingering he, of necessity, ordered his men in this way. He made a slender vanguard for the small number of his people; before the same he placed archers, of whom he made John, earl of Oxford, the captain; in the right wing of the vanguard he placed Gilbert Talbot to defend the same; in the left verily he set John Savage; and himself, trusting to the aid of Thomas Stanley, with one troop of horsemen and a few footmen did follow; for the number of all his soldiers, of all kinds, was scarcely five thousand, besides Stanley's men, whereof about three thousand were at the battle, under the conduct of William. The king's forces were twice as many and more. Thus, both the vanguards being arrayed, as soon as the soldiers might see one another afar off, they put on their headpieces and prepared for the fight, listening for the alarm with expectant ear. There was a marsh between the two hosts, which Henry on purpose left on the right hand, that it might serve his men instead of a fortress; by doing this he also left the sun upon his back. But when the king saw them across the marsh, he commanded his soldiers to make a charge against them. They, suddenly making great shouts, assaulted the enemy first with arrows; the others were nothing faint to fight but began also to shoot fiercely; but when they came to handstrokes the matter then was dealt with by blades. In the meantime the earl of Oxford, fearing lest his men in fighting might be surrounded by the multitude, commanded in every rank that no soldiers should go more than ten feet from the standards; which order being known, when all the men had thronged densely together, and paused from fighting, the adversaries were therewith afraid, supposing some trick, and so they all forebore the fight a certain space, and this truly many [of Richard's soldiers] did with right goodwill, for they rather wished the king dead than alive, and therefore fought faintly. Then the earl of Oxford in one part, and others in another part, with the bands of men close to one another, made a fresh charge upon the enemy, and in triangular array vehemently renewed the conflict. While the battle continued thus hot on both sides between the vanguards, King Richard understood, first by spying where Earl Henry was afar off with a small force of soldiers about him, and then afterward drawing nearer he knew it perfectly by evident signs and tokens that it was Henry; wherefore, all inflamed with ire, he struck

his horse with the spurs, and ran out of his own side, ahead of the vanguard, against him. Henry perceived King Richard coming upon him, and because all his hope was then in valor of arms, he received him with great courage. King Richard at the first brunt killed certain men, overthrew Henry's standard together with William Brandon the standard bearer, and fought also with John Cheney, a man of much strength, far exceeding the common sort, who fought with him as he came, but the king with great force drove him to the ground, clearing a path with his weapon on every side. But yet Henry bore the brunt longer than his own soldiers would ever have thought, who were now almost out of hope of victory, when suddenly William Stanley came to the rescue with three thousand men: then truly in a moment the rest all fled, and King Richard alone was killed fighting manfully in the thickest press of his enemies. In the meantime, the earl of Oxford, after a little skirmishing, put to flight those who fought in the front, a great many of whom were killed in the chase. But many more refused to fight, who came to the field with King Richard for awe, and for no goodwill, and departed without any danger, as men who desired not the safety but the destruction of that prince whom they hated. There were killed about a thousand men. . . . As for the number of captives, it was very great; for when King Richard was killed, all men immediately threw away their weapons, and freely submitted themselves to Henry's obeisance, most of whom would have done the same at the beginning, and had it not been for King Richard's scouts, scurrying to and fro, they might have done so. Among them the chief were Henry, earl of Northumberland, and Thomas, earl of Surrey. The earl of Surrey was committed to captivity, where he remained for a long time; the earl of Northumberland was received into favor as a friend at heart. Henry lost in that battle scarcely a hundred soldiers, among whom there was one principal man, William Brandon, who bore Earl Henry's standard. The field was fought on [22 August 1485], and the fight lasted more than two hours.

The report is that King Richard might have sought to save himself by flight; for they who were about him, seeing the soldiers even from the first stroke lift up their weapons feebly and faintly, and some of them depart the field furtively, suspected treason, and exhorted him to flee; and indeed when the matter manifestly began to go against him, they brought him swift horses; but he, who was not unaware that the people hated him, out of hope for a better situation afterward, is said to have answered that that very day he would make an end either of war or of life, such great fierceness and such huge force of mind did he have; wherefore, knowing certainly that that day would either yield him a peaceable and quiet reign thenceforth or else perpetually bereave him of the same, he came to the field with the crown upon his

head, that thereby he might make either a beginning or an end of his reign. . . .

After the victory was obtained, Henry immediately gave thanks unto almighty God for the same; then afterward, replenished with incredible joy, he climbed the nearby hill, where, after he had commended his soldiers, and ordered them to care for the wounded, and to bury the slain, he gave everlasting thanks to the nobility and gentlemen, promising that he would be mindful of their benefits; all the meanwhile the soldiers cried, "God save King Henry, God save King Henry!" and with heart and hand uttered all the show of joy that might be; and, when Thomas Stanley saw this, he at once set King Richard's crown, which was found among the spoils in the field, upon his head, as though he had already been proclaimed king by commandment of the people after the manner of his ancestors, and that was the first sign of prosperity. After that, ordering them to pack up all baggage, Henry with his victorious army proceeded in the evening to Leicester, where he remained two days, to refresh his soldiers after their travail and pains, and to prepare for going to London. In the meantime the body of King Richard, stripped naked and laid upon a horse's back, with the arms and legs hanging down on both sides, was brought to the abbey of Franciscan [friars] at Leicester —a miserable spectacle in good truth, but not unworthy for the man's life—and there was buried two days afterward without any pomp or solemn funeral. . . .

Questions: Why did Bosworth turn out as it did? What moral elements does the author find in the story of the battle? Compare this description of Richard III's death and burial with the findings of the Greyfriars dig (doc. 100).

100. The Rediscovery of Richard III

In the summer of 2012, archaeologists excavated the site of Greyfriars Friary Church in Leicester, where King Richard III was believed to have been buried after his death at Bosworth in 1485 (described in doc. 99). After the medieval friary was dissolved by Henry VIII and its church dismantled, the exact location of Richard's grave remained unknown for centuries. The very first day of the 2012 dig resulted in an astonishing discovery: five feet below a modern parking lot, in what had been the east end of the friary church, was a crudely dug grave containing a skeleton of a man about thirty years old, with a dramatically curved spine, who bore the marks of gruesome

injuries. Intensive study of the bones established their association with Richard III beyond any reasonable doubt. Richard's remains were reinterred at Leicester Cathedral in 2015 in a ceremony that entailed far more pomp and ceremony than his first burial.

Source: R. Buckley, M. Morris, J. Appleby, T. King, D. O'Sullivan, and L. Foxhall, "'The King in the Car Park': New Light on the Death and Burial of Richard III in the Grey Friars Church, Leicester, in 1485," *Antiquity* (June 2013): pp. 531–33, 535–36, figs. 10 and 11.

The grave identified as that of King Richard III was located in Trench 1 in the southwestern sector of the choir, most likely against the southern choir stall. According to contemporary accounts, Richard III was buried without any pomp or solemn funeral. The archaeology of the grave, and the position of the body in it, reflect this.

The body appears to have been placed in the grave with minimal reverence. Although the lower limbs are fully extended and the hands lay on the pelvis, the torso is twisted to the north and the head, abnormally, is propped up against the northwest corner of the grave. Irregular in construction, the grave is noticeably too short for the body. Unlike other graves in the choir and presbytery in Trench 3, which were of the correct length and neatly rectangular with vertical sides, this grave was an untidy lozenge shape with a concave base and sloping sides, leaving the bottom of the grave much smaller than its extent at ground level. Even in the relatively poor parish church of St. Peter's, in Leicester's northeastern quarter, graves inside the church were neatly squared, dug to the correct length and the interred provided with coffins. Only a little extra effort by the gravediggers to tidy the grave ends would have made this grave long enough to receive the body conventionally. That they did not, instead placing the body on one side of the grave, its torso crammed against the northern side, may suggest haste or little respect for the deceased.

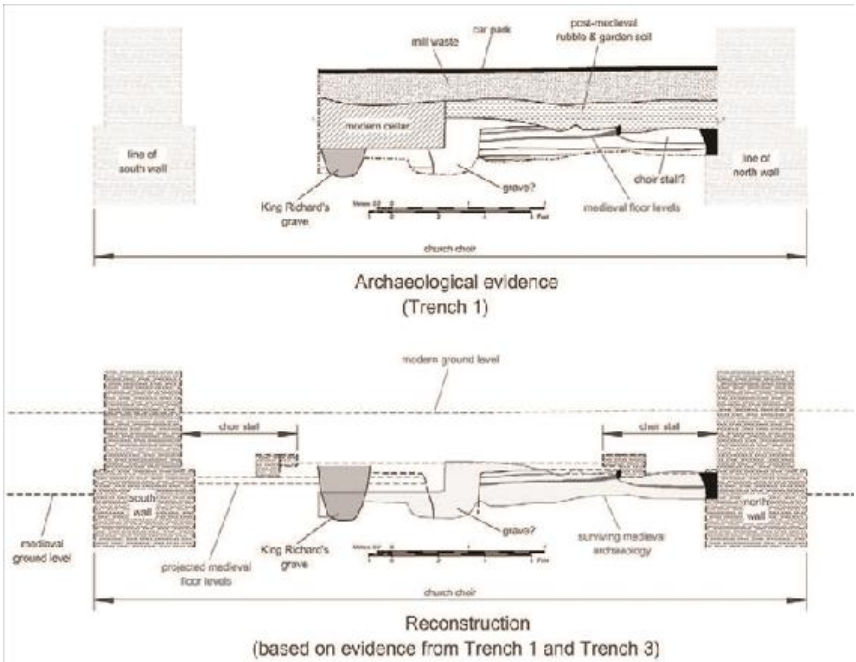

Fig. 39. Cross-section and reconstruction of the excavation of the former choir of Grey Friars church, Leicester, showing the location of King Richard III's grave.

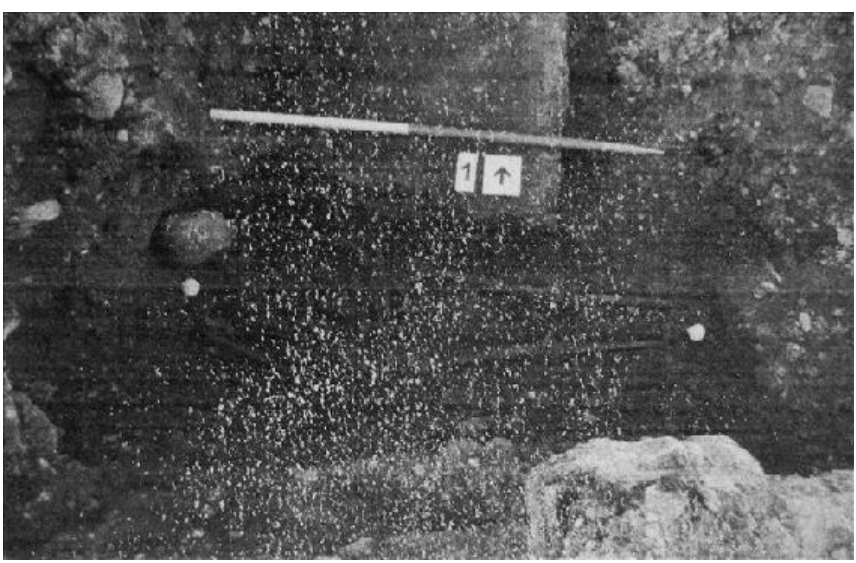

Fig. 40. King Richard III's grave, with human remains *in situ*, looking north.

The significance of the choir as the chosen burial place is ambiguous. It is one of the more important areas of the church (though not as high status as the presbytery), commonly reserved for

the burial of important individuals and highly visible to the friars attending divine office. The choir of a friary church was not generally accessible to the laity, however, thereby hindering public veneration of the tomb.

Friaries typically "attracted" burials of affluent townsfolk and their specific patrons, which could include both royalty and nobility. It is true that Richard III is the only king to remain buried in a friary; although the deposed and murdered Richard II (d. 1400) was initially laid to rest at the Plantagenet Dominican foundation at Kings Langley, his body was translated to Westminster in 1419 by Henry V. Perhaps significantly, friaries frequently seem to have served as resting places for the executed dead, where these were of high standing.

There was no evidence for a shroud or coffin. Wrapping a body in a shroud, common practice in medieval Leicester, often draws the limbs tightly together and skeletons which exhibit a compact longitudinal appearance are often deemed to be shroud-wrapped. Wood coffins are common. Their shape is usually distinguishable in the grave soil with nails marking where coffin boards were fixed together. In this grave, the casual position of the body—legs slightly apart, shoulders expanded, arms flexed—certainly suggests the absence of a tight shroud and perhaps the absence of any burial wrapping at all. As is common in most medieval burials, no trace of clothes, other goods or personal ornaments was found, although evidence from the mid-thirteenth century onwards shows that eminent people, particularly ecclesiastics and royalty, were often buried in their 'official' robes with emblems of office. . . .

The final arrangment suggests Richard III's body was lowered feet first, torso and head second. . . . That no effort was made to rearrange the corpse once again implies haste. Even moving the body to the center of the grave would have allowed the torso and head to be straightened and the body to be arranged more carefully. The haste may partially be explained by the fact that Richard's damaged body had already been on public display for several days in the height of summer, and was thus in poor condition.

The hands were crossed at the wrists, most likely right over left, and placed above the right pelvis. This is unusual for burials in medieval Leicester, although it is common elsewhere. Four different arrangements of the arms appear in other medieval sites in Leicester: 1) extended beside, or partially flexed over the pelvis; 2) conspicuously bent to a near right-angle over the abdomen; or 3) beyond right-angle over the chest; and 4) crossed over the pelvis (i.e., one arm physically crossing the other, usually at the wrists). A recent

study of 118 burials in the churchyard of St Michael's, a small parish church in Leicester's northeastern quarter, shows that almost all of those buried belong to the first category; while only a very few belong to the second and third categories and even fewer to the fourth. Of 864 burials examined in the churchyard of St Peter's, also in Leicester's northeastern quarter, a substantial majority belonged to the first category and few to the other three. It is therefore possible that Richard III was buried with his hands bound. . . .

The skeleton is in good condition apart from the feet, which are missing as a result of later disturbance, some of which was recorded to within 90mm of the skeleton's lower limbs. There was no evidence of substantial postmortem bone displacement, and the position of the vertebrae in the ground clearly reflected their position in life and was not a product of the awkward burial position.

Stable isotope analysis carried out during radiocarbon dating shows that the individual had a high protein diet, including significant amounts of seafood (amounting to some 25 percent of the diet), suggesting high status. . . . The carbon-14 evidence provides a modeled date of death of 1456–1530 AD (at least 95.4% probability), consistent with an individual who died in 1485.

The individual is male, with a gracile build, in his late 20s to late 30s, compatible with Richard's known age at death of 32. He had severe idiopathic adolescent-onset scoliosis. This may have been progressive and would have put additional strain on the heart and lungs, possibly causing shortness of breath and pain, although not all scoliosis sufferers experience pain from their condition. Unaffected by scoliosis, he would have stood around 5 feet, 8 inches (1.73m.) tall, above average height for a medieval man, though his apparent height might have decreased as he grew older and his disability may have lifted his right shoulder higher than his left. This is consistent with the few contemporary accounts of Richard III's physical appearance.

Ten perimortem wounds have been identified on the remains, eight on the skull and two on the post-cranial skeleton. Two large wounds underneath the back of the skull, consistent with a halberd and a sword blow, are likely to have been fatal. A third, smaller, penetrating wound to the top of the skull is more enigmatic, but may have been caused by a sharp blow from a pointed weapon, such as a dagger, on the crown of the head. Other wounds were more superficial and none of the skull injuries could have been inflicted on someone wearing a helmet of the type favored in the late fifteenth century. Two wounds, a cut on a right rib and a cut to the right pelvis typical of a thrust through the right buttock, are again unlikely to have been inflicted on

someone wearing armor. These, along with two wounds to the face, may be "humiliation injuries" delivered after death. Similar injuries on skeletons from Towton, victims of an earlier battle in the Wars of the Roses, have been compared with those on Richard III's bones. . . .

The genealogical link between the two modern-day descendants and Richard III has also been verified. Initial analysis of the mitochondrial DNA has revealed a match between sequences in the control region of the mitochondrial DNA from the skeleton and two direct descendants of Richard III's sister, Anne of York, through the female line. All three also share a type of mitochrondrial DNA that is relatively rare in the population of Europe, so it is highly unlikely that the match is coincidental.

Questions: In what ways was this burial unusual for the time? What evidence do the authors offer in support of the body's identification as Richard III? What does this discovery add to our understanding of Richard's life and death?

101. Polydore Vergil's Account of Henry VII

In the wake of his victory at Bosworth (described in doc. 99 above), Henry VII (r. 1485–1509) sought to secure his own claim to the throne by marrying Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth. As his position grew more stable, Henry poured his energy into replenishing the royal coffers which had been deleted by recent decades of civil strife, implementing administrative reforms that strengthened the monarchy at baronial expense, and enhancing the prestige of his fledgling dynasty through diplomacy and the marriage of his children into established royal houses.

The following description by Polydore Vergil highlights the instability of Henry's early reign, as well as the king's unpopularity in his later years.

Source: trans. D. Hay, *The Anglica Historia of Polydore Vergil, 1485–1537* (London: Camden Society, 1950), pp. 3–7, 11–13, 127–31.

After Henry had obtained power, from the very start of his reign he then set about quelling insurrections. Accordingly, before he left Leicester, he dispatched Robert Willoughby to Yorkshire with instructions to bring back Edward, the fifteen-year-old earl of Warwick, sole survivor of George, duke of Clarence, whom [King] Richard had hitherto held in the castle called Sheriff Hutton. For indeed Henry, not unaware of the mob's natural tendency always to

seek changes, was fearful lest, if the boy should escape and given any alteration in circumstances, he might stir up civil discord. Having made for the castle without delay, Robert received the boy from the commander of the place and brought him to London, where the wretch, born to misery, remained in the Tower until his death. . . . Henry meanwhile made his way to London like a triumphant general, and in the places through which he passed was greeted with the greatest joy by all. Far and wide the people hastened to assemble by the roadside, saluting him as king and filling the length of his journey with laden tables and overflowing goblets, so that the weary victors might refresh themselves. But when he approached the capital, the chief magistrate (whom they call the "mayor") and all the citizens came forth to meet him and accompanied him ceremoniously as he entered the city: trumpeters went in front with the spoils of the enemy, thundering forth martial sounds. In this manner Henry came, after all his toils, to his kingdom, where he was most acceptable to all. After this he summoned a Parliament, as was the custom, in which he might receive the crown by popular consent. His chief care was to regulate affairs of state well and, in order that the people of England should not be further torn by rival factions, he publicly proclaimed that (as he had already promised) he would take for his wife Elizabeth, daughter of King Edward [IV] and that he would give complete pardon and forgiveness to all those who swore obedience to his name. Then at length, having won the good will of all men and at the instigation of both nobles and people, he was made king at Westminster on 31 October and called Henry, seventh of that name. . . .

As soon as he was crowned the king created his uncle Jasper, to whom he was much indebted, duke of Bedford; Thomas Stanley he made earl of Derby, Giles Daubeney Lord Daubeney, Robert Willoughby lord of Broke; and he ennobled many others. To others he restored their ranks and estates. Upon yet others he bestowed public office or further preferment, or enriched them with gifts of money, according to his estimate of their services to him. Furthermore, he recalled home Thomas, marquis of Dorset, and John Bourchier, lord Fenewary, who . . . had both been left behind in Paris as sureties or bondsmen for the money which had been advanced there as a loan. Likewise he summoned to his side John Morton, bishop of Ely, from Flanders. To his mother Margaret, a most worthy woman whom no one can extol too much or too often for her sound sense and holiness of life, Henry allotted a share in most of his public and private resources, thus easing her declining years. Henry, moreover, was the first English king to appoint retainers, to the number of about two hundred, as a bodyguard: these he incorporated into his household so

that they should never leave his side; in this he imitated the French kings so that he might thereafter be better protected from treachery. These things having been done, the king, so that he might deserve equally well of both his friends and his enemies, at once granted his pardon for past offenses to all of whatever party who swore allegiance to him. He then took in marriage Elizabeth, daughter of Edward, a woman indeed intelligent above all others, and equally beautiful. It is legitimate to attribute this to divine intervention, for plainly by it all things which nourished the two most ruinous factions were utterly removed, by it the two houses of Lancaster and York were united and from the union the true and established royal line emerged which now reigns. . . .

After Henry had well regulated his affairs in London he set out for York, in order to keep in obedience the folk of the north, savage and more eager than others for upheavals. He halted his journey at Lincoln, where he kept the feast of Easter. While he lingered here, he was informed that Francis, lord Lovell, together with Humphrey Stafford, had disappeared from sanctuary at Colchester, but no one could say for certain where they had gone. Treating the matter as of small account the king made (as he had planned to do) for York. But he was no sooner there than the whole town was suddenly filled with the news that Francis Lovell had assembled a large number of troops in Yorkshire itself, a little beyond the castle of Middleham, and was to march on the city itself with hostile intent; and that Humphrey, moreover, was provoking a major rebellion in Gloucestershire. Since the news at first lacked confirmation, the king was not much disturbed, but when he learnt from the dispatches of his own servants that what had at first been rumored was indeed true, he was struck by great fear; for he had neither an army nor arms ready for his supporters, and did not know whence he could gather a reliable force at that time in a town so little devoted to his interests, which hitherto had cherished the name of Richard. But since it was essential to act quickly in order not to give his enemies the opportunity of increasing their numbers, he dispatched against the enemy his whole retinue, including his bodyguard, to the total of three thousand men, even although they were ill equipped: for the greater part had made armor for themselves from leather. Meanwhile the king assembled soldiers from every possible source. The extemporized forces which had been sent forward advanced hurriedly until they approached the enemy camp, where they immediately announced the royal terms: that the king would voluntarily extend his pardon to those who laid down their arms. This step proved to be the salvation of the king. For Francis, whether because as a result of this offer he had less faith in his troops, or because the irresolute fellow was seized by groundless

fear, fled secretly by night with his men. When the flight of their leader was known, they all submitted themselves without delay to the king's authority. Francis, who had not attempted a fight through his feebleness of spirit, betook himself headlong to the district or county of Lancashire and went to Thomas Broughton, a knight of great authority in those parts, with whom he hid for some months. Humphrey, frightened by the flight of Francis, fled from his troops to the sanctuary known as Culham, not far from the place called Abingdon. But because this sanctuary does not protect those who are accused of *lèse-majesté*, Humphrey was taken out and beheaded; his brother Thomas earned a pardon. [After this Henry put down further attempts to overthrow him.]

Henry, after he had subdued in this way the final conspiracy made against him, and established peaceful relations with all neighboring kings, could now after many anxieties and dangers relax his mind in peace when, while he was enjoying his deserved quiet, he became at once preoccupied by a fresh care. For he began to treat his people with more harshness and severity than had been his custom, in order (as he himself asserted) to ensure they remained more thoroughly and entirely in obedience to him. The people themselves had another explanation for his actions, for they considered they were suffering not on account of their own sins but on account of the greed of the monarch. It is not indeed clear whether at the start it was greed; but afterward greed did become apparent, so irresolute, vacillating, and corrupted are all human purposes. Indeed nothing could certainly be found wanting in King Henry which should be found in the best of princes. But, lest he alone of all men should have been universally blessed, behold, while employing harshness against his people, he gradually laid aside all moderation and sank into a state of avarice, which—since it is itself without limits—torments beyond all bounds those whom it once preoccupies. Evil fortune blighted Henry in this manner so that he, who already excelled other princes in his many virtues, should not also be preeminent in subduing all vices. The king wished (as he said) to keep all Englishmen obedient through fear, and he considered that whenever they gave him offense they were actuated by their great wealth. He began severely to punish all offenders who had committed any crime prohibited and forbidden by the laws of the realm or municipal regulations. All of his subjects who were men of substance, when found guilty of whatever fault, he harshly fined, in order, by a penalty which especially deprived of their fortunes not only the men themselves but even their descendants, to make the population less well able to undertake any upheaval and to discourage at the same time all offenses. This drastic method of inflicting punishment was so rapidly applied that all people, in terror

of losing their wealth, at once began to behave themselves and (as the saying goes) to withdraw into their shells. But, lo and behold, no sooner had Henry embarked on this course of action than at once a multitude of informers, a type of creature always most ruinous in any state, converged from all directions on the court. They dangled before the king's eyes ways of making money, and poured into his ears the crimes of many, by which the treasury could be filled with enormous spoils. At first the king, on the urgent advice of his faithful counselors, refused to listen, but later, attracted by the chance of advancing his private interest, he began gradually to pay attention to the informers, and at length to listen to them eagerly. Thus the good prince by degrees lost all sense of moderation and was led into avarice.

The informers, when they saw they could easily approach the king, thereupon indiscriminately and dishonorably entrapped and accused men of all sorts and conditions, and charged them with a variety of crimes. While the informers were thus trying to twist the king's severity into brutality, there then came on the scene two astute lawyers, Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley. They very soon exerted great influence over the monarch and, since they were educated men, he rapidly appointed them as judges to pronounce judicial sentence on wrongdoers. The pair, probably realizing that they had been given the job by the king not so much to administer justice as to strip the population of its wealth, without respite and by every means fair and foul vied with each other in extorting money. Whomsoever, whether a nobleman or a man of the people, the informers charged with the flimsiest or vaguest false accusations, Empson and Dudley condemned and deprived of their property. . . . And they proceeded against not the poor but the wealthy, churchmen, rich magnates, even the intimates of the king himself, and any and every individual of fortune—not only the living, but the dying, and those who were long since dead, if by chance they had left property. Moreover, they devised many fresh ways of satisfying the king's avarice while they were eagerly serving as the ministers of their own private fortunes. . . . While such methods were in vogue, you could have seen daily in the halls of Empson's and Dudley's houses a host of convicted persons awaiting sentence, to whom wretchedly evasive replies were given, so that they were exhausted by the duration of their anxiety and voluntarily gave up their money. For many preferred to do this, rather than remain longer in that sort of agony. Thus through the agency of these two men, who behaved as if they were plotting to snatch all lay and ecclesiastical wealth, the most savage harshness was made complete.

In the meantime, serious men who were unwilling to tolerate this state of affairs urgently entreated the two judges to refrain from

plotting harm against wretched mortals and from conspiring their deaths (for many indeed died, stricken by grief at the loss of their possessions). Some important clergymen also publicly preached their disgust at such proceedings and at the same time exposed the king's avarice. But these remonstrances were of no avail. Shortly afterward the king died and the two extortioners (as we shall presently mention in the life of Henry VIII) were deprived of their lives, just as they had deprived others of their possessions.

While this state of affairs persisted no one dared to complain, at all events openly, but all greatly feared for themselves and their interests, since the king claimed that he tolerated these exactions on purpose, in order to preserve the population's obedience by these means. For the rest, avarice (as we have shown) now so dominated and penetrated into all activities, that it was truly burdensome to his people and brought no profit to the monarch. For although the king was not unaware that, as a result of this ruthless extortion, there were many who rather feared than loved him, his sole interest was to ensure his safety by supervising all details of government; through which preoccupation he at last so wore out his mind and body that his energies gradually declined, he fell into a state of weakness, and from that, not long after, died. Had he been spared to live a little longer, it may be believed that he would have established a more moderate manner of conducting all his affairs. For in the year prior to his death, learning that there was widespread complaint concerning the plundering in which the two judges daily indulged, he is said to have decided to restrain them, to deal more gently with his people and to restore what the two had illegally seized, so that thereafter justice and mercy might flourish throughout his kingdom. But even while he was contemplating this reform death cut him off. When he realized he was not to be allowed to live longer he laid down in his will that all were to be given back such possessions as had been illegally carried off to the treasury by those two most brutal extortioners.

Questions: What steps did Henry VII take to secure his throne? How does Polydore Vergil judge Henry? How was the judicial system subject to abuse and corruption under Henry? Who resisted these abuses, and how?

102. An Italian Relation of England

The following extracts come from the report of a Venetian official who traveled to England in 1496–97 in the entourage of a Venetian ambassador. While it is not always entirely accurate, the impressions of the foreign visitor are always

interesting and at times perceptive, while the wealth of detail and the sweeping generalizations make for good reading.

Source: trans. C.A. Sneyd, *A Relation, or Rather a True Account, of the Island of England* (London: Camden Society, 1847), pp. 8–12, 20–29, 31–39, 41–46, 54; revised.

The climate, as your magnificence knows, is very healthy, and free from many complaints with which [Italy] is afflicted; and, though so far to the northwest, the cold in winter is much less severe than in Italy, and the heat proportionably less in summer. This is owing to the rain, which falls almost every day during the months of June, July, and August; they have never any spring here, according to the report of the islanders. . . . They abound also in every description of tree, though, according to Caesar, they have not the beech or the fir. They have laurels, and myrtles, and all our fruit trees, with the exception, however, of the olive and the orange. They are not without vines; I have eaten ripe grapes from one, and wine might be made in the southern parts, but it would probably be harsh. This natural deficiency of the country is supplied by a great quantity of excellent wines from . . . Germany, France, and Spain; besides which, the common people make two beverages from wheat, barley, and oats, one of which is called beer, and the other ale; and these liquors are much liked by them, nor are they disliked by foreigners, after they have drunk them four or six times; they are most agreeable to the palate, when a person is by some chance rather heated.

Agriculture is not practised in this island beyond what is required for the consumption of the people; were they to plow and sow all the land that was capable of cultivation, they might sell a quantity of grain to the surrounding countries. This negligence is, however, atoned for by an immense profusion of every comestible animal, such as stags, goats, fallow deer, hares, rabbits, pigs, and an infinity of oxen. . . . But above all, they have an enormous number of sheep, which yield them quantities of wool of the best quality. They have no wolves, because they would immediately be hunted down by the people; it is said, however, that they still exist in Scotland, as well as in the forest of Caledonia at the extremity of the island, toward the north. Common fowls, pea-fowls, partridges, pheasants, and other small birds abound here beyond measure, and it is truly a beautiful thing to behold one or two thousand tame swans upon the River Thames, as I, and also your magnificence have seen, which are eaten by the English like ducks and geese. Nor do they dislike what we so much abominate, that is, crows, rooks, and jackdaws; the raven may croak at his pleasure, for no one cares for the omen, and there is even a penalty attached to destroying them, as they say that they keep the

streets of the towns free from all filth. . . .

I believe that what has been written concerning the extreme shortness of the nights in summer is true; for many truthful persons tell me, and assure me that it is a positive fact, that at the farthest extremity of Scotland, at the time of the summer solstice, one may see to read and write at any hour of the night, and that the days in winter are short in the same proportion. But this cannot be the case all over the island, because during the whole winter that I found myself there with your magnificence, I observed the length of the daylight with great attention, and there were never less than seven hours together, in which one could see to read and write. How many hours the sun might be above the horizon, however, I cannot say, for it is so rarely to be seen in the winter, and never but at midday. . . .

The English are, for the most part, both men and women of all ages, handsome and well-proportioned; though not quite so much so, in my opinion, as it had been asserted to me before your magnificence went to that kingdom; and I have understood from persons acquainted with these countries, that the Scots are much handsomer; and that the English are great lovers of themselves, and of everything belonging to them; they think that there are no other men than themselves, and no other world but England; and whenever they see a handsome foreigner, they say that "he looks like an Englishman," and that "it is a great pity that he should not be an Englishman," and when they partake of any delicacy with a foreigner, they ask him whether such a thing is made in *his* country. They take great pleasure in having a quantity of excellent victuals, and also in remaining a long time at table, being very sparing of wine when they drink it at their own expense. And this, it is said, they do in order to induce their other English guests to drink wine in moderation also; not considering it any inconvenience for three or four persons to drink out of the same cup. Few people keep wine in their own houses, but buy it, for the most part, at a tavern; and when they mean to drink a great deal, they go to the tavern, and this is done not only by the men, but by ladies of distinction. The deficiency of wine, however, is amply supplied by the abundance of ale and beer, to the use of which these people are become so habituated, that, at an entertainment where there is plenty of wine, they will drink them in preference to it, and in great quantities. . . .

They all from time immemorial wear very fine clothes, and are extremely polite in their language; which, although it is, like the Flemish, derived from the German, has lost its natural harshness, and is pleasing enough as they pronounce it. In addition to their civil speeches, they have the incredible courtesy of remaining with their heads uncovered, with an admirable grace, while they talk to each

other. They are gifted with good understanding, and are very quick at everything they apply their minds to; few, however, excepting the clergy, are addicted to the study of letters, and this is the reason why anyone who has learning, though he may be a layman, is called by them a clerk. And yet they have great advantages for study, there being two general universities in the kingdom, Oxford and Cambridge, in which are many colleges founded for the maintenance of poor scholars. . . .

The common people apply themselves to trade, or to fishing, or else they practise navigation; and they are so diligent in mercantile pursuits that they do not fear to make contracts on usury.

They all attend mass everyday, and say many Paternosters in public (the women carrying long rosaries in their hands, and any who can read taking the office of our Lady with them, and with some companion reciting it in the church verse by verse, in a low voice, after the manner of churchmen), and they always hear mass on Sunday in their parish church, and give liberal alms. . . .

They have a very high reputation in arms; and from the great fear the French entertain of them one must believe it to be justly acquired. But I have it on the best information that when the war is raging most furiously, they will seek for good eating, and all their other comforts, without thinking of what harm might befall them.

They have an antipathy to foreigners, and imagine that they never come into their island, but to make themselves masters of it, and to usurp their goods; neither have they any sincere and solid friendships among themselves, insomuch that they do not trust each other to discuss either public or private affairs together, in the confidential manner we do in Italy. And although their dispositions are somewhat licentious, I never have noticed anyone, either at court or among the lower orders, to be in love; whence one must necessarily conclude either that the English are the most discreet lovers in the world, or that they are incapable of love. I say this of the men, for I understand it is quite the contrary with the women, who are very violent in their passions. Howbeit the English keep a very jealous guard over their wives, though anything may be compensated in the end, by the power of money.

The want of affection in the English is strongly manifested toward their children; for after having kept them at home till they arrive at the age of seven or nine years at the most, they put them out, both males and females, to hard service in the houses of other people, binding them generally for another seven or nine years. And these are called apprentices, and during that time they perform all the most menial offices; and few are born who are exempted from this fate, for

everyone, however rich he may be, sends away his children into the houses of others, while he, in return, receives those of strangers into his own. And on inquiring their reason for this severity, they answered that they did it in order that their children might learn better manners. But I, for my part, believe that they do it because they like to enjoy all their comforts themselves, and that they are better served by strangers than they would be by their own children. Besides which the English being great epicures, and very avaricious by nature, indulge in the most delicate fare themselves and give their household the coarsest bread, and beer, and cold meat baked on Sunday for the week, which, however, they allow them in great abundance. If they had their own children at home, they would be obliged to give them the same food they made use of for themselves. . . .

Nevertheless, the apprentices for the most part make good fortunes, some by one means and some by another; but, above all, those who happen to be in the good graces of the mistress of the house in which they are domiciled at the time of the death of the master; because, by the ancient custom of the country, every inheritance is divided into three parts; for the church and funeral expenses, for the wife, and for the children. But the lady takes care to secure a good portion for herself in secret, first, and then the residue being divided into three parts as aforesaid, she, being in possession of what she has robbed, of her own third, and that of her children besides (and if she have no children, the two-thirds belong to her by right), usually bestows herself in marriage upon the one of those apprentices living in the house who is most pleasing to her, and who was probably not displeasing to her in the lifetime of her husband; and in his power she places all her own fortune, as well as that of her children, who are sent away as apprentices into other houses. . . .

I saw, one day, when I was with your magnificence at court, a very handsome young man of about eighteen years of age, the brother of the duke of Suffolk, who, as I understood, had been left very poor, the whole of the paternal inheritance among the nobility descending to the eldest son; this youth, I say, was boarded out to a widow of fifty, with a fortune, as I was informed, of 50,000 crowns; and this old woman knew how to play her cards so well, that he was content to become her husband, and patiently to waste the flower of his beauty with her, hoping soon to enjoy her great wealth with some handsome young lady. . . .

Nor must your magnificence imagine that these successions may be of small value, for the riches of England are greater than those of any other country in Europe, as I have been told by the oldest and most experienced merchants, and also as I myself can vouch, from what I have seen. This is owing, in the first place, to the great fertility of the

soil, which is such that, with the exception of wine, they import nothing from abroad for their subsistence. Next, the sale of their valuable tin brings in a large sum of money to the kingdom; but still more do they derive from their extraordinary abundance of wool, which bears such a high price and reputation throughout Europe. And in order to keep the gold and silver in the country, when once it has entered, they have made a law, which has been in operation for a long time now, that no money nor gold nor silver plate should be carried out of England, under a very heavy penalty. And everyone who makes a tour in the island will soon become aware of this great wealth, as will have been the case with your magnificence, for there is no small innkeeper, however poor and humble he may be, who does not serve his table with silver dishes and drinking cups; and no one who has not in his house silver plate amounting to at least £100 sterling, which is equivalent to 500 golden crowns with us, is considered by the English to be a person of any consequence. But above all are their riches displayed in the church treasures; for there is not a parish church in the kingdom so mean as not to possess crucifixes, candlesticks, censers, patens, and cups of silver; nor is there a convent of mendicant friars so poor, as not to have all these same articles in silver, besides many other ornaments worthy of a cathedral church in the same metal. . . .

The English, however, could muster a very large army, were they as devoted to their crown as the Scots are; but from what I understand few of them are very loyal. They generally hate their present sovereign, and extol their dead ones. Nevertheless, they reject the Caesarean code of laws, and adopt those given to them by their own kings. Nor are proceedings carried on in this country by the deposition of anyone, or by writing, but by the opinion of men, both in criminal and civil causes. And if anyone should claim a certain sum from another, and the debtor denies it, the civil judge would order that each of them should make a choice of six arbitrators, and when the twelve are elected, the case they are to judge is propounded to them: after they have heard both parties, they are shut up in a room, without food or fire, or means of sitting down, and there they remain till the greater number have agreed upon their common verdict. But before it is pronounced each of them endeavors to defend the cause of him who named him, whether just or unjust; and those who cannot bear the discomfort yield to the more determined, for the sake of getting out sooner. And therefore the Italian merchants are gainers by this bad custom every time that they have a dispute with the English; for although the native arbitrators chosen by the English are very anxious to support the cause of their principal, before they are shut up, yet they cannot stand out as the Italians can, who are accustomed

to fasting and privations, so that the final judgment is generally given in favor of the latter. . . .

There are three estates in England: the popular, the military, and the ecclesiastical. The common people are held in little more esteem than if they were slaves.

The military branch is employed in time of war in mustering troops. The clergy have the supreme sway over the country, both in peace and war. Among other things, they have provided that a number of sacred places in the kingdom should serve for the refuge and escape of all delinquents, and no one, even if he were a traitor to the crown, or had plotted against the king's own person, can be taken out of these by force. And a villain of this kind, who, for some great excess that he has committed, has been obliged to take refuge in one of these sacred places, often goes out of it to brawl in the public streets, and then, returning to it, escapes with impunity for every fresh offense he may have been guilty of. This is no detriment to the purses of the priests, nor to the other perpetual sanctuaries; but every church is a sanctuary for forty days; and, if a thief or murderer who has taken refuge in one cannot leave it in safety during those forty days, he gives notice that he wishes to leave England. . . . It is not unamusing to hear, how the women and children lament over the misfortune of these exiles, asking, "how they can live so destitute out of England," and adding moreover that "they had better have died than go out of the world," as if England were the whole world!

. . . But, notwithstanding all these evasions, people are arrested every day by dozens, like birds in a covey, and especially in London; yet, for all this, they never cease to rob and murder in the streets. Perhaps this great prevalence of crime might have been better prevented, had not former kings condensed the criminal jurisdiction under one head, called the chief justice, who has the supreme power over punishment by death. This officer either goes himself, or sends his lieutenants or commissioners, at least twice a year all over the kingdom, but still more frequently to London, to put the unfortunate criminals to death; and it is scarcely possible that one person should suffice for so great an extent of country, though the arrangements are as good as possible, for the kingdom of England, with the principality of Wales, is divided into thirty-six parts, which they call in their language shires. . . . And if the king should propose to change any old established rule, it would seem to every Englishman as if his life were taken from him; but I think that the present King Henry will do away with a great many, should he live ten years longer.

I dare say that your magnificence will have been surprised, when I

stated that there was only one chief justice in the whole kingdom; and will, perhaps, have imagined that I meant to imply that the dukes of Lancaster, York, Suffolk, and many others dispensed justice in their own countries; but these English noblemen are nothing more than rich gentlemen in possession of a great quantity of land belonging to the crown; . . . and the jurisdiction, both civil and criminal, and the fortresses remain in the hands of the crown. . . . In the earliest times of the Norman kings, it was no great matter to give large estates to many gentlemen; for when King William the Bastard conquered England for the crown, all the land that was not fit for cultivation was divided into a number of parts called [fees]. . . . It is computed that there are at present 96,230 of these fees; but the English Church is in possession of 28,015 of them; the remainder are the property of the crown, or of the barons of the realm, who, however, pay acknowledgments to the crown for them. There is not a foot of land in all England, which is not held either under the king or the Church. . . . In former times the titled nobility, though, as I said before, they possessed no fortresses, nor judiciary powers, were extremely profuse in their expenditures, and kept very great retinues in their houses (which is a thing the English delight in beyond measure); and in this manner they made themselves multitudes of retainers and followers, with whom they afterward molested the court, and their own countries, and in the end themselves, for at last they were all beheaded. Of these lords, who are called *milites* (knights), there are very few left, and those diminish daily. But the present King Henry has appointed certain military services to be performed by some of his own dependents and familiars, whom he knows can be trusted on any urgent occasion; and can be kept on a much smaller number of fees. . . . All the lands of the nobility, however, are not in cultivation, for a great portion lies barren and waste; and I am told that there are more than 4,000 parks in England, all enclosed with timber fences. And such is the condition of the lords temporal in this kingdom. . . .

There are scarcely any towns of importance in the kingdom, excepting these two: Bristol, a seaport to the west, and Eboracum, otherwise York, which is on the borders of Scotland; besides London to the south. . . . At present, all the beauty of this island is confined to London; which, although sixty miles distant from the sea, possesses all the advantages to be desired in a maritime town, being situated on the river Thames, which is very much affected by the tide, for many miles (I do not know the exact number) above it: and London is so much benefited by this ebb and flow of the river that vessels of 100 tons burden can come up to the city, and ships of any size to within five miles of it; yet the water in this river is fresh for twenty miles below London. Although this city has no buildings in the Italian style, but

only of timber or brick like the French, the Londoners live comfortably, and it appears to me that there are not fewer inhabitants than at Florence or Rome. It abounds with every article of luxury, as well as with the necessaries of life. . . . In one single street, named the Strand, leading to St. Paul's, there are fifty-two goldsmith's shops, so rich and full of silver vessels, great and small, that in all the shops in Milan, Rome, Venice, and Florence put together, I do not think there would be found so many as magnificent as those to be seen in London. . . . These great riches of London are not occasioned by its inhabitants being noblemen or gentlemen; being all, on the contrary, persons of low degree, and artificers who have congregated there from all parts of the island, and from Flanders, and from every other place. No one can be mayor or alderman of London who has not been an apprentice in his youth; that is, who has not passed the seven or nine years in that hard service described before. Still, the citizens of London are thought quite as highly of there as the Venetian gentlemen are at Venice, as I think your magnificence may have perceived.

The city is divided into several wards, each of which has six officers; but superior to these are twenty-four gentlemen whom they call aldermen, which in their language signifies old or experienced men; and, of these aldermen, one is elected every year by themselves, to be a magistrate named the mayor, . . . and the day on which he enters upon his office, he is obliged to give a sumptuous entertainment to all the principal people in London, as well as to foreigners of distinction; and I, being one of the guests, together with your magnificence, carefully observed every room and hall, and the court where the company were all seated, and was of opinion that there must have been 1,000 or more persons at table. This dinner lasted four hours or more; but it is true that the dishes were not served with that assiduity and frequency that is the custom with us in Italy, there being long pauses between each course, the company conversing the while.

And in such manner is England ruled and governed.

Questions: What aspects of England impress the author positively? Which aspects does he view negatively? How accurate is his description? What are his sources of information? Where has he exaggerated or overgeneralized? How does England, in his view, compare with other regions?

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